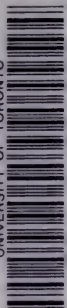


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MEMOIRS
OF THE
QUEENS OF PRUSSIA.

BY
EMMA WILLISHER ATKINSON.

LONDON:
W. KENT AND CO.,
PATERNOSTER ROW, AND FLEET STREET.
1858.



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TO
A MUCH BELOVED INVALID SISTER,

This Book

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY
THE AUTHORESS.

PREFACE.

AN account of the Lives of the Queens of Prussia cannot fail to possess some interest for the English reader, independent of all merit of composition, at a moment when England is about to bestow the eldest of her royal daughters upon the Crown Prince, and, in all human probability, the future Sovereign of that country.

With the greater confidence, therefore, I now lay before the public the following “Memoirs of the Queens of Prussia;” the materials for which have in great part been selected from the memoirs of contemporary authors, the despatches of foreign ambassadors, &c. during a residence of some time in the dominions of the King of Prussia. And let me here offer my sincere thanks to all those who have contributed to aid me in my researches, or to lighten my labours by their kindness, during my sojourn in Germany.

I must also here observe, that, as the object of this work is professedly the history of the Queens of Prussia, none of whom ever, even at a period when most of the chief States of Europe were ruled by female influence, had any share in the government, or interfered in political affairs, I have thought it more consonant with my subject to give only such outlines of con-

temporary historical events, as were necessary for the clearer connection of my narrative, or the better development of cause and effect.

Of the history of the Electresses of Brandenburg previous to the assumption of the regal title by that house, and of the character of the people to whose keeping we are about to entrust our Princess Royal, I proceed to draw a cursory sketch in my Introductory Chapter.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

QUEENS OF PRUSSIA.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

"PRUSSIA," says the 'Jahrbuch' for 1855, "may be looked upon as a little Germany." And, comprising as it does within its boundaries samples of so great a variety of continental races, and districts of the most varied regions of Central Europe,—from the fertile soil and picturesque mountains of Silesia, round by the mercantile coasts of the Baltic, to the barren, sandy plains of Westphalia, and the smiling, garden-like regions of the beautiful Rhine,—the idea of an epitome of Germany does not seem misapplied to this kingdom.

An Englishman, escaping from the hurry that life in London has become, to rush, with the impetus of its high pressure still urging him, at railroad speed over the Continent, is struck by the leisurely air which even business assumes in its towns. The Frenchman saunters through the streets of his capital, because he has time to be amused by the way ; whilst the German, being neither under steam-pressure, nor trying to crowd three lives into one, as we do, has leisure to enjoy his pipe and his meditation.

In the same manner, any one accustomed to do business only in England, is astonished at the slowness of the process in Germany ; at the difficulty of obtaining information ; in short, at the number of "circumlocution offices" upon which he stumbles. Nevertheless, he who has leisure to appreciate the

absence of that spirit of emulation which in England besets all ranks, and is the destruction of so many amongst the middle and lower classes, feels it a haven where he may grow old respectably, and not rush into gray hairs with such irreverent haste as we English do now-a-days.

Another thing, too, which is especially appreciated by the educated dependent, who in England has groaned an unwilling thrall to the monied despotism of the middle classes, is, that in Germany he is enfranchised, because the mind and not the money marks the social position of the man; because the question there is not what a man has, but what he is. A position which seems somewhat Utopian to a person used only to the narrow circles of exclusion subdividing English society, but which is, nevertheless, fact.

We find there but little of the attempt at style in point of dress, household attendants, equipage, &c., which characterizes so many English establishments. The German is content to seem that which he is.

Were I asked what was the prevailing characteristic of the Germans as a nation, I should say domesticity. Not that their houses are nearly so "comfortable" as ours, for although they have adopted our word "comfort," the thing signified is but little understood amongst them.

But though the English idea of fireside happiness has no meaning in Germany, yet the German, as, surrounded by his family, he takes his coffee in the garden, and smokes while the ladies of the party knit, is as pleasant a picture of domestic tranquillity as one would wish to see.*

As regards morality, the German standard is high. "There is no civilized people which is more moral, nor amongst whom the mean duration of life is longer."† So far the German in

* The Germans smoke inveterately, all day long, cigar after cigar. The whole air of the towns is redolent of tobacco-smoke, an advantage if it could overpower the rival odour of the gutters.

† Rougemont.

his private and domestic relations. In his literary and scientific capacity, I need not remind my readers of the very large proportion of writers of eminence upon philosophy, science, and history, furnished by Germany. The language, pliable as it is, and capable of rendering with accuracy the nicest distinctions of scientific definition, or of becoming a vehicle for the lofty inspiration of the poet, affords ample facility for such minds as those of Goethe, Schiller, and Jean Paul to "wreak themselves on language;" whilst Humboldt, Liebig, and Oken have made a torch of it, to light up the secret caverns of nature and the mysteries of science, for eyes not penetrating enough to pierce the darkness for themselves. Yet, whilst that structure of the language obtains, which places the active principle, often the copula itself at the end of the sentence, German can never be the first of living languages; because it does not flash its purport clear into the mind at once, but produces its effect more gradually; does its work by reasoning, rather than by the photography of thought. (Perhaps this structure of the language may account for the German seldom being a passionate man—he has time to reflect before he gets to the end of a sentence!) For the same cause, its writers are too diffuse; its historians are too *minutieux*, its philosophers too apt to refine upon refinement. He who took a carpenter's foot-rule* to measure the length and breadth of one of Kant's sentences, might still arrive at the same result of so many feet by so many inches, with the sentences of some more recent writers. With regard to light literature, Germany has her novelists, although they are somewhat cumbrous and far less read than the translated works of English and American writers of the same class. "Sam Weller's" sayings are quoted with an unintentional adoption of the paternal pronunciation of his patronymic. "Uncle Tom" shows his black face in every bookseller's window there as well as here. Eva and Topsy make one of the prettiest of the porcelain Licht-bilder commonly sold in the

* *Fraser's Magazine*, March, 1857, article on Kemble's "State Papers."

shops, and even the "Song of Hiawatha" appears done into German as "Das Lied von Hiawatha"!

It is characteristic of the Germans, whose humour is rather genial and kindly than sarcastic, that they have no satirist of eminence; and, to their credit be it spoken, few licentious writers. With regard to the female part of the community, there are few literary women amongst them. There are comparatively few who write their own language with facility and elegance; probably because the German ladies devote themselves too entirely to the cares of the household to have time for the cultivation of their literary tastes; but they are, I can answer for it, right good wives and mothers, sisters, friends, and nurses.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates German national character than German national music; from the simple "Volkslieder," whose depth and tender pathos are never fully appreciated till they are heard from the lips of a German, accompanied by their own peculiar and singularly expressive melody, to the grand compositions of Beethoven, and the sublime strains of Handel—all is singularly characteristic of a people with whom affection is the want of the heart, religion the necessity of the soul.

But the Prussian, as a subject, is what more especially concerns us just now. In this respect he differs widely from the Englishman, who has a growl for every new measure of Government, and could always legislate far better than the Legislature. The German troubles himself but little about politics. One does not hear every little assemblage of men discussing the Prussian equivalent for "last night's debates."* For his further character in this capacity, I quote the words of a very good book, which has been suffered to go out of print.†

* Of course there is a good and sufficient reason why Prussian subjects should not openly express their opinions upon political affairs; but there is also undoubtedly far less natural inclination to question the proceedings of the powers that be amongst Germans than amongst Englishmen.

† Rougemont, "Précis d'Ethnographie de Statistique et de Géog. Historique, ou Essai d'une Géographie de l'Homme."

“There is no nation which is more heartily attached to its rulers than this, none to which obedience is less painful. The German nation, too, is the only one which has never stained the throne of its sovereigns with blood by means of assassinations or judicial murders.”

A very slight acquaintance with Prussian history is sufficient to afford abundant proof of the truth of this statement, as regards that part of Germany. The people which submitted like obedient children to the well-meant harshness of Frederic William I., aided Frederic II. unflinching with heart and hand during the long campaigns of that desperate struggle for existence, the Seven Years' War, looked with affectionate pity rather than contempt upon the kind-hearted, weak-headed Frederick William II., and rose as one man to right their injured and bereaved, but ever beloved sovereign Frederic William III., need no testimony but their own deeds to show what devotion their future monarchs may expect from them, and to justify the further statement of the same author, that the German character may be summed up in one word, “Love!”

I must now pass on to an outline of the early history of Prussia. The family which now occupies the throne traces back its origin to a very early period. Its head was that Count Tassilon who somewhere about the year 800 founded the Suabian house of Hohenzollern. The eleventh count of that family left two sons, Frederic, who continued the line of Hohenzollern, and Conrad, who about the year 1200 took the title of Burgrave of Nuremberg. Frederic V., Burgrave of Nuremberg, having rendered services to the Emperor Charles IV., was by him made a prince of the empire. His two sons, according to the customs of the time, each succeeded to a share of his domains, and the elder, dying without posterity, his brother, Frederic VI., inherited the whole burgraviate, and ultimately became the first Elector of Brandenburg of the Hohenzollern family.

This territory, the indomitable barbarity of whose inhabitants

had opposed a bar even to Roman conquest, and afforded constant occupation to the arms of Charlemagne, first submitted to a governor imposed by Henry the Fowler, in 927. From that time, until the above-mentioned Frederic V. of Nuremberg became its possessor, no less than nine races of Markgrafs (the Hohenzollern was the ninth) had possessed the sovereignty, all of whom, what with fighting with their rebellious subjects at home, and their turbulent neighbours abroad, besides occasionally selling a province or so when pressed for money, had their hands tolerably full. By this extraordinary means of sale the new Mark, and even the whole electorate itself, had changed hands several times. The Duke of Misnia bought it for 400,000 florins,* and resold it after a year's possession to the Emperor Sigismund; and he, having plenty of occupation of the kind already, did not feel himself in a position to cope with the mutinous nobility of the Marks, who had taken full advantage of the non-residence of their late sovereigns, to become as completely insubordinate as factious nobles usually did under such circumstances. He therefore appointed Frederic VI., Burgrave of Nuremberg, to be his governor in the electorate, and to subdue his rebellious subjects for him. Frederic having leagued himself with the dukes of Pomerania, encountered the rebel lords at Zossen, and defeated them: he turned his arms next on the dukes of Pomerania themselves, and gained a victory over them at Angermund, thus reuniting the Mark Uckeran, which they had usurped, to his territory. But the Emperor being displeased at his attempt to annex Saxony also to his dominions, he here voluntarily terminated his conquests, after having received the investiture of the electorate, at the diet of Constance, in 1417.

The electorate of Brandenburg at that time consisted of the old, middle, and new Marks, the Ucker Mark, and Pregnitz; but the new Mark was still in the hands of the Teutonic knights.

Frederic I., as we must now call him, was extremely

* About £60,000.

fortunate in his conjugal relations. The first Electress of Brandenburg was the "fair Else of Bavaria,"* of whom the present Queen of Prussia is a namesake, and a worthy representative. She was as good as she was fair: the sick, the oppressed, and the needy, fled to her for tendance, shelter, and relief. She was a mother to her people, and as a mother she was revered and beloved by them.

The usual partition of estates took place at the death of Frederic I.; but John the Alchemist, having been deprived by his father of his birthright, was replaced in the succession by his brother, the vigorous and noble-minded Frederic II. of the Iron Tooth, who refused the tendered crowns of Bohemia and Poland, rather than commit an injustice.† He made his seditious cities feel the force of his iron fang by depriving them—Berlin amongst others—of their jurisdiction, while he carried on with no less vigour the system begun by his father, of depressing the too powerful nobility. The war commenced upon him by George Podiébrad, on account of Lusatia having voluntarily surrendered itself to the magnanimous Iron Tooth, turned to his advantage and gained him fresh territories. He also redeemed the new Mark from the knights of the Teutonic Order, and took the additional titles of Duke of Pomerania and Mecklenburg, of Vandalia, Schwerin and Rostock.

Frederic of the Iron Tooth abdicated in favour of his brother Albert Achilles, or Ulysses, as he was surnamed according to the custom of those days. This modern Achilles finally succeeded in quieting the rebellious Nurembergers after eight battles. In justification of his title, it is said that he leaped alone from the walls into the town of Greiffenberg, and defended

* German account of the marriage and entrance into Berlin of the present Queen of Prussia, published by subscription, 182—.

† The Pope had offered the former to him in order to deprive George Podiébrad of it. The crown of Poland he also declined to accept, unless upon its refusal by Casimir, brother of the late King Ladislaus. Frederick the Great, in reference to this disinterested conduct, says, this prince should have been called the Magnanimous, instead of Dent de Fer.

himself till his soldiers forced an entrance and came to his rescue. Besides being a great admirer of the theory of chivalry, he was so great also in the practice of arms, that he gained the prize in seventeen tournaments, and was never unhorsed in any. He was twice married; first to the Princess Margaret of Baden, and secondly, to Ann of Saxony. He finally abdicated in favour of John Cicero, his son. John Cicero's eloquence, it is said, reconciled the three kings of Bohemia, Hungary, and Poland when they were disputing about the possession of Silesia and Lusatia; but his descendant, Frederic the Great, is of opinion that the 6000 horse by which he was accompanied might have added force to his arguments. He accorded freedom from taxation to the nobility and clergy.

The name of his Electress was Margaret of Misnia. He left two sons, one of whom, Joachim Nestor, succeeded him; the other, the cardinal archbishop Albert of Mainz and Magdeburg, became the most formidable opponent of the reformation, then beginning in Germany.

Joachim Nestor himself was also a staunch adherent of the papacy, but his wife, the Danish princess Elizabeth, was not only a Lutheran, but a great admirer and personal friend of Luther himself; her husband treated her with harshness on this account, and so unendurable did his persecutions become, that the Electress was obliged to escape by night, leaving her children behind her, to Torgau, the residence of her Protestant uncle, John of Saxony. Her husband's wrath waxed so hot at this desertion, that he threatened all sorts of fearful punishments if she fell again into his hands. However, his anger having undergone the cooling influence of time, he permitted her sons to visit her at her residence of Lichtenberg on the Elbe, where she had fixed her abode in order to be near her beloved friend and pastor Luther. She even once resided for three months in his house, in order yet more fully to enjoy the benefit of communion with him. She lived to a good old age, having survived her husband for twenty years.

Scandalized at his wife's apostacy, Joachim Nestor before his death caused his son to take a solemn oath of adhesion to the orthodox faith. Joachim II. reflected for four years on the claims of his oath versus the claims of his judgment, which was on the side of the reformed doctrines, and as conscience acted as advocate on both sides, the new Elector was in sore perplexity; his affection for his mother and her example, however, probably turned the scale, for he became a Protestant.

His first chaplain Agricola, called from his birth-place Meister Eisleben, was one of the proposers of the Interim of Augsburg, and was nicknamed by Luther his "Eislebener beer-brother;" on his death Joachim delivered the care of his conscience into the hands of Musculus, who had adopted that more significant title instead of his family name of Meusel; he was a sturdy disputant, a defender of the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, and a very "powerful preacher" besides. A man of muscle also it appears that he needed to be, for we are told that one day, as he was preaching in the open air, three spirits dragged away the pulpit from under him; he however, nothing daunted, caught hold of the branches of a tree over head and continued his sermon! Joachim II. himself was extremely original, both in matters of religion and in other things. He embraced the views of his chaplain on the above-mentioned much-contested question of justification; upon one occasion he summoned his court and clergy to hear his "testament;" it so happened that Gottschalk Buchholzer, generally called only Gottschalk, one of the principal opponents of Musculus, was present; the Elector, addressing himself to the ecclesiastics especially, began his speech thus:—"I have hitherto often listened to your preaching, now it is your turn to listen to mine." He then declared his entire approval of the views of Musculus, and wound up his discourse in the following terms:—"By the Lord George! I will stand by Musculus, I commend my soul to God, but yours, with your Gottschalkischen doctrines, to the devil." Gottschalk, says Vehse,

died soon after this "electoral expectionation." Joachim II. was very strict in his administration of justice; robbers found no mercy at his hands, and culprits in matters of dress, which had then risen to an extravagant pitch of absurdity, little more: he set Musculus to write a book of "Warning and Exhortation" to those who were led away by the "Order-and-honour-endangering-Hose-devil" of the times, and to enforce the warning, he caused three burgers' sons who had appeared in the "audacious," nether investments then in fashion, "monstrous slashed breeches containing over a hundred ells of stuff,"* to be hung up in a great cage in a public place, with music to play before them all day.

Despite his religious strictness, however, Joachim II. had his peculiar weaknesses, he was very fond of the good things of this world, and from sheer good nature allowed himself to fall into much extravagance.† Neither was he particularly faithful in his conjugal relations. He was twice married, first to Madeline, daughter of that great opponent of the reformation, George of Saxony; and secondly, to Hedwig of Poland, who, having injured herself by a fall, was ever after obliged to walk with the aid of crutches. Despite the efforts of his skilful financier Matthias, and of his great minister Distelmeyer, "the eyes and the light of the Mark,"‡ the Elector managed to leave a debt of 2,600,000 thalers as a legacy to his successor; his death in 1571 was brought on by a cold, caught in a wolf-hunt, in which he had joined, despite his advanced age and the severity of the Christmas weather.

John George was a far more zealous Lutheran than his father had been; he continued to Distelmeyer his office as chancellor, but showed great severity to several of his father's favourites, in particular to Lippold the Jew, who had helped Joachim II.

* Vehse.

† Vehse makes the following extract from the letter of an ambassador, contained in the papers of Cardinal Granvelle, "Si dice che questo Marchese in una dieta, spese 30,000 fiorini in vino."

‡ "Oculus et lumen Marchiæ." - *Vehse*.

in his money difficulties, and who was now put to death with great cruelty.

The dissensions between the Lutheran and Calvinistic parties had now reached such a height that terrible scandal was often cast by each side upon its own Christianity. The Lutherans looked upon Mahommedanism as a venial error compared with Calvinism, and the Calvinists returned the compliment.* A writer of the time says, "The priests so fought, scolded, and quarrelled that it was sin and shame. In one church they even began to fight with the candle-sticks, whilst those of another threw stones at each other in the market-place.† One of the most remarkable men of this time was Leonhard Thurneysser, a Swiss by birth, who, after travelling in Europe, Asia, and Africa, had on his return, gained immense celebrity as a physician, anatomist, botanist, alchemist and judicial astrologer. The Elector consulted him on the health of his second wife, Sabina of Anspach, and Thurneysser afterwards settled at the Prussian court as "Leibmedicus." He there acquired immense wealth by means of the rich and powerful individuals who applied to him for horoscopes, talismans, amethyst-water, ruby, emerald and pearl tincture, oil of beauty, &c. &c. Even the Emperor Maximilian and Queen Elizabeth of England sent letters to him, and so great was the luxury in which he lived, that he could even afford to wear silk stockings every day, then a mark of great opulence.

John George was thrice married, and was the father of twenty-three children. Sophia of Liegnitz died whilst he was still electoral prince, but Sabina of Anspach and Elizabeth of Anhalt were successively Electresses of Brandenburg. The two latter ladies were both of them great friends of Thurneysser, and used to visit and consult him upon all emergencies.

John George was succeeded in 1596 by his eldest son

* During the reign of John Sigismund a book was printed by an ecclesiastic named Hoë, entitled "Better a Turk than a Calvinist."

† Thurneysser; see Vehse.

Joachim Frederic. Like his father he was a zealous Lutheran ; his first wife, Catherine of Cüstrin, was not only likewise firmly attached to those doctrines, but was a sincere Christian besides—a conjunction by no means inevitable. She caused various books to be printed in aid of the cause of religion, and even composed a book of prayers herself ; and though she embraced the doctrine of justification by faith, she by no means excluded good works from her practice. Her benevolence was profuse, but judicious. She was a “mother to the poor, a nurse to the sick.”* It was she who founded the Castle Apotheke at Berlin, for the purpose of distributing medicine gratis to the poor, and who also established a great dairy in the suburb of Cöln, which gave its name to the still existing “Molkenmarkt” of that quarter. This Electress, too, was a model of housewifery and hospitality.

Whilst still electoral princess, and residing in Halle, her husband being administrator and Bishop of Magdeburg and Havelberg, she had become acquainted with Thurneysser ; struck with admiration of his talents, she cultivated his friendship, and consulted him on all occasions, especially, when left bare of money by her profuse liberality, she applied to him to obtain her fresh supplies by the acceptance of bills, the sale of her jewels, &c. &c. With her husband’s concurrence she built a laboratory for him at Halle, in order to ensure his more frequent visits to their court. Joachim Frederic’s second Electress was Eleonore, second daughter of Albert Frederic, the imbecile Duke of Prussia, whose estates he administered ; Albert Frederic was the son of Albert of Brandenburg, the Grand Master of the Teutonic knights, who, having laid aside the habit of his order and become a Protestant, received in 1525 the investiture of the duchy of Prussia from the hands of Sigismund King of Poland : Prussia having been tributary to that kingdom since the treaty of Thorn in 1466, had completed the humiliation of the Teutonic order.

* Vehse.

The Princess Eleonore, by her marriage with the Elector Joachim Frederic, became, curiously enough, mother-in-law of her own elder sister Anna, who was the wife of that prince's son, John Sigismund.

It was this marriage of John Sigismund with Anna, the eldest daughter of Albert Frederic, which added the duchy of Prussia to the possessions of the elder branch of the family of the Electors of Brandenburg, (Albert Frederic dying without male issue,) at the same time that it gave rise to the long-continued disputes concerning the succession of Juliers and Berg, which was afterwards to afford the pretext for Frederic the Great's invasion of Silesia.* The mother of the present Electress Anna and of the Electress Dowager Eleonore of Brandenburg, was Marie Eleonore, daughter of William, Duke of Cleves. She was the eldest of four sisters; her brother dying without issue left his inheritance to her.† But when the succession became open in 1609, the Pfalzgraf Wolfgang William of Neuburg (son of her second sister Ann); the Elector of Saxony, to whose family the eventual succession had been promised by an imperial decree; and John Sigismund,—all claimed it. The Elector of Brandenburg and the Duke of Neuburg, each thinking a part of this fertile territory better than the chance of none, were minded to come to an amicable partition. The Emperor Leopold, having interested views in the matter, favoured the idea; but the Protestant princes of the Union, who saw his aim, opposed it, and placed John Sigismund at their head: whilst the Catholic princes, who had united themselves in the League, supported Wolfgang William. The Dutch and Henry IV. of France also took an active share in the dispute, but that monarch's death in 1610 stopped the immediate outbreak of war. This contest was the first smoke of those fermenting elements of discord, out of whose spontaneous combustion afterwards blazed forth the Thirty Years' War.

John Sigismund once more tried to settle the affair amicably

* Preuss, "Lebens Geschichte Friedrichs des Grossen."

† "Mém. pour servir à l'hist. de Brand." Fred. Great.

this time by means of a matrimonial alliance; but unfortunately, on the occasion of the Pfalzgraf's visit to arrange for his marriage with the Elector's daughter, the conviviality rose to a somewhat boisterous pitch, and the Elector gave his intended son-in-law a box on the ear, which effectually drove all matrimonial ideas, in that quarter, out of his head. The Palgrave of Neuburg shortly afterwards married a Bavarian princess, and went over to the Roman Catholic religion.

The Elector John Sigismund, on his side had long beheld with disgust the excessive intolerance of the Lutherans towards the opposite party. Now, with a political motive—namely, the hope of securing the continuance of assistance from the Dutch—superadded, he went over to the “reformed,” that is, German Calvinistic doctrines. The affair of the succession was at length temporarily settled by a division, John Sigismund obtaining Cleves, Ravensberg, and Mark; and the Palgrave, Juliers, Berg, and Düsseldorf.

The change in her husband's religious profession was highly repugnant to the wishes of the Electress Anna, who was both staunch in Lutheran doctrines and possessed of a decided will. She, it is said, even allowed it to be apparent that she did not disapprove of the open and somewhat violent expression of public opinion upon this unpopular step. This Electress appears to have interfered considerably in political measures during the succeeding reign of her weak-minded son George William. She raised difficulties with the Lutheran government of Prussia respecting his investiture into that duchy, which she wished to subvert to her younger son, John Sigismund. She also betrothed one of her daughters, the fair Eleonora, to Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden, during George William's absence, and carried out the marriage, despite his declared opposition, on his return; thus allying him, against his will, with the great opponent of the Emperor of Germany, (on whose continued favour he believed his own and his country's existence to depend,)* and

* He used frequently to say, “So bleibt der Kaiser, Kaiser, So bleibe ich und mein Sohn wohl Kurfürst, wenn ich an dem Kaiser halte.”—*Vehse*.

plunging him into the most cruel perplexities. Besides this, she endeavoured to reanimate the Lutheran party in his capital, by introducing preachers of that persuasion, likewise during his absence : so that her final withdrawal to the court of her son-in-law Gustavus Adolphus, was a great relief to George William.

It was on the death of the Elector John Sigismund, which took place in 1619, that the hereditary ghost of the Brandenburg family, the mysterious White Lady, made her first appearance. Accounts differ as to whose ghost the White Lady was, and why she could not rest quietly in the land of spirits. Some said she was the vengeful spirit of the fair and frail Anna von Sydow, the favourite of Joachim II., whom his successor had imprisoned for life in the castle of Spandau ; but such a visitation of ghostly vengeance of the sins of great grandfathers upon their great grandsons, seems particularly inconsistent with spiritual justice. Some called her Agnes, and some said she was Beatrix of Meran, who murdered her two children for mad and wicked love of Albert the Handsome of Nuremberg, an ancestor of the family ; but that lady lived a century earlier than he did,* therefore her ghost had no better reason for frightening the Brandenburgs than that of Anna von Sydow. Pöllnitz says she was the ghost of an old woman whom Joachim II. turned out of her house in order to build upon the site. Whoever she was, nobody dreamed of doubting her visits, nor that she afterwards chose the year 40 in each century for her grand appearances. Nay, she was considered rather an honourable appendage and heirloom than otherwise, and all, even the remote branches of the house claimed a White Lady of their own, who, if she did not show herself before the death of any important member of the family, or before any disastrous event about to befall it, at least manifested her continued and friendly remembrance, by making horrible and unearthly noises, shrieks, and screams. She was also apt to

* Vehse.

assert her right to frequent the premises of the family to whom she had attached herself, by very substantial arguments, if any one ventured to dispute the haunt with her. During the reign of the great Elector she appeared frequently. Upon one occasion she showed herself to his favourite, the Oberkämmerer Burgsdorf, who greeted her in very uncomplimentary terms, and attempted to grapple with her, upon which she seized him by the throat and flung him down the flight of steps he was about to descend. Several white ladies appeared during King Frederick William I.'s reign; but he was incredulous, and on one occasion had a white lady who was caught whipped out of her white garments, when it appeared that a scullion had enacted the part. At another time a soldier, similarly caught in the fact, was made to "ride the wooden ass," clad in his ghostly array.

We now come to the accession of George William, and to the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War. During this disastrous period the electorate of Brandenburg, owing to the weakness of its ruler and the treachery of his knavish minister Schwarzenberg, became by turns the prey of either party. Tossed like a shuttlecock from the Emperor to the King of Sweden, and from the King of Sweden to the Emperor, according as the danger appeared more pressing on the one hand or the other, the feeble George William lost friends on the one side by his lukewarmness, whilst his indecision gained him no allies on the other. His family connections, too, were most unfortunate; he had married Elizabeth Charlotte of the Palatinate, sister of Frederic V. the unfortunate King of Bohemia, to whom he feared to afford a shelter in his dominions, lest he should draw upon himself the anger of the Emperor and the King of Poland, and incur the same fate as his two uncles, the Margrave John George of Jägerndorf, and the Administrator of Magdeburg.

The Emperor's anger, as we have said, was a complete bugbear to him; what, then, was his dismay when Gustavus Adolphus approached his capital, and, in his very castle itself, gave

him the choice of his friendship or his enmity! He sent his Electress to entertain the unwelcome guest,* while he and his councillors held hasty consultations, whose tendency it is not difficult to guess; but this enforced alliance was only languidly maintained by George William, and his territory and subjects suffered fearfully from the faults of their sovereign.

The fate of the fair town of Magdeburg, as with a deliverer almost, as it were, within hail, it fell into the savage hands of Tilly's ruthless soldiery, was an awful monument of George William's indecision, whilst, misled by his doubtful ally Saxony, he was hesitating whether to allow Gustavus Adolphus to pass the intervening river.

Again the mediation of the Electress was had recourse to, and she was despatched with her ladies to the camp to mollify the anger of the hero at this needless and frightful waste of human life.

Of the Electress herself but little is known. She had not much influence over the education of her son, who was separated from her in early life, when he was sent, as we have before seen, to Holland. After her husband's death she led a retired life at Crossen, seldom seeing her son and his wife. Wegführer, in his *Life of Louisa of Orange*, says that, "but little either of good or evil" can be said about the Electress Elizabeth Charlotte, save that she gave an annual subscription to the College of Joachimsthal which the Elector Joachim II. had founded.† She died in 1660.

It is a relief to turn from the contemplation of such a scene of vacillation and confusion as George William's reign presents, to the firm measures and beneficent administration of his successor Frederic William, subsequently known as the Great Elector, who came to the electorate in 1640. Fortunately for him, at the suggestion of Schwartzenberg, who, says Frederic

* "Mém. pour servir."

† The Gymnasium of Joachimsthal was destroyed in 1636, and rebuilt by Frederic William and his consort Louisa, at Berlin.

the Great, dreaded the power of his developing energies, he had been sent to Holland, where he received his education, a far more enlightened one than it would have been at home probably.

On his father's death he found himself in the unenviable position of a "Prince, without being in possession of his dominions, an Elector without having the power." *

But Frederic William faced his difficulties manfully, and set to work with perseverance and energy, to repair the ravages made by the war in his dominions. To gain time for this, he made a truce for twenty years with the Swedes, and prevailed upon the Dutch to evacuate his Rhenish domains, of which they were then in possession. It appears that there was at one time an idea of a marriage between the Elector and the young Queen Christina of Sweden, but luckily, as Wegführer remarks, it went no further, Oxenstiern the Swedish minister being opposed to the plan; and that "strong-minded" lady indulged her vagaries elsewhere, instead of in Brandenburg. Frederic then seems for a time to have thought of one of the daughters (Sophia, future Electress of Hanover,) of Elizabeth of Bohemia, who was then residing at Rhenen. Finally, and happily, however, he fixed upon the young Princess of Orange, and thus secured a partner whom he ever loved with devoted attachment, and whose loss he never entirely recovered. This lady was one of the best and purest of her sex. Hers was a character, such as one seldom finds in any but the comparatively untried and untempted paths of private life.

Leading a life of the most saint-like purity and devotion, her piety by no means interfered with her duties either as consort of a great prince,† or as wife of a much-beloved husband; whilst at the same time her household, to which in

* "Mém. pour servir."

† Leti says of her, "The court was a terrestrial paradise, of which the Electress was the tree of life, whose angelic virtues and celestial perfections imparted life, mind and grace to all around."

all its details she attended personally, was looked upon as an example of justly-blended economy and liberality by all the ladies of the electoral dominions. The account-books of all her household expenses were kept by her with a neatness and skill which would have done credit to a regular accountant. Even the minutiae of the linen-press and the kitchen met with their share of her attention, and sometimes even of her actual presence and direction, whilst the supper which awaited the Elector on his return from his long hunting excursions, was generally—at least in part—prepared by her hands. Although her health was always extremely delicate, she never failed to assemble her household to early prayers, nor to conduct the musical part of the service herself; her charity also was munificent and punctually attended to; yet with all these occupations for her time, she never failed to secure some period in the day for the cultivation of her favourite accomplishment, music, in which she was no mean proficient. She was a poetess also; her poetry was all of a devotional cast; one of the best of her pieces is that beautiful hymn, “Jesus my Confidence,” which in moments of deepest despondency never failed to send a gleam of comfort through the heart of her unfortunate namesake, Louisa of Mecklenburg Strelitz, whose history and character, as well as her untimely death, afford in so many respects a parallel to those of this ancestress of her husband’s house.

The death of her first child was a sore trial to the Electress Louisa, and though she resigned herself to what she regarded as a fatherly chastening, still she could not be either unconscious of, or indifferent to, the disappointment of her husband and of his people, when, after a lapse of some time, there seemed no further probability of her giving birth to an heir: this privation cost her many a mental conflict between her love, and what she considered her duty to her husband. At length, after much tearful and prayerful meditation on the subject, she

came to the resolution of demanding a separation, in order that he might marry again.

Her husband, who looked upon her as the light of his existence, was astounded when she made the proposal to him, and vehemently rejected it, as might be expected, telling her that man had no right to put asunder those whom God had joined. Reassured and joyful, Louisa, now, like another Hannah, vowed a vow to the Lord to found a home for the homeless, in acknowledgment of His bounty, should He give her a man-child.* Her prayer was answered by the birth of the strong and healthy young Prince, Carl Emil. We may imagine the joy of both parents on this occasion, and the difficulty with which Louisa prevailed upon herself to allow her mother, who had remained with, and carefully tended her for several months before the birth of the child, to carry him back with her to Holland for the sake of his health.

After this occurrence she resumed those active occupations, which, by the directions of her mother and her medical attendant, she had been obliged for some time to discontinue. Her health, it is to be feared, was weakened by the want of that self-indulgence which she could never be prevailed upon to allow herself. She accompanied her husband to Königsberg during his war with Sweden, and it was there that Frederic, afterwards King of Prussia, first saw the light. After this period Louisa's health materially declined, and the birth of twins, which both died, in 1664, left her in a very weak and shattered state; a journey was therefore undertaken to Holland,† for the purpose of trying the effect of her native air in restoring her to health;

* This vow Louisa was unable for several years to perform, owing to the exhausted state of the treasury during the subsequent time of war; but she righteously bore it in mind, economised privately for it, and at last fulfilled it by founding an asylum for orphans at Bötzw, or Oranienburg, as it was afterwards called in honour of her.

† The last use which she made of her influence with her husband was to promote the cause of peace, by inducing him to mediate between England and Holland.

and here, though much against her will, her mother prevailed upon Frederic William to leave her. She seemed to be better for a short time, but her constant cough and pain gave her significant warnings, which she at least understood, to set her house in order; and she knew that that hour was approaching, for which she was strengthening herself, when she wrote in that beautiful prayer, which is still treasured as a relic of her, "Once I prayed for earthly blessings with hot tears, and Thou didst graciously hear me; help me now to pray for that which Thou commandest me to pray for." Her only wish was now to return to her husband and children. At last this desire became too urgent to be denied its gratification, and she set off; her illness assumed so alarming a character upon the road that she was unable to proceed, and the Elector was sent for. Terrified by the news of her dangerous state, Frederic William flung aside all business and flew to her side. Her joy at seeing him, whom she feared she had parted with for the last time in this world, was affecting in the extreme; but her yearning wish was still "home, home." A hand-litter was accordingly constructed for her, and thus she was borne back to the home of her wedded love, which she was to quit no more alive. Even on her death-bed she showed her usual unselfish forethought, denying herself that little gratification of maternal love, a last embrace of her children, lest they might suffer from her disease, and contenting herself with taking a last, long, yearning look at her rosy, healthy, darling Carl Emil, and the younger Princes, Frederic and Louis.

Her husband's grief was terrible. Remembering in his distress the vow which Louisa had made, and the answer which had been vouchsafed to her prayer, he, too, made a solemn vow in writing, signed with his name and sealed with his seal, to found a house of refuge for the poor, and to endow it with 6000 Thalers per annum, should God grant him a prolongation of his wife's life. But the decree had gone forth that it was time for Louisa to return to her Father's house in Heaven, and the

last sad scene drew near ; yet sad it could scarcely be called, for her saint-like faith and peace had so calmed the minds of all her attendants, and so stilled even the anguish of her husband, that not a sob was heard in the stillness of that chamber where Louisa's stainless soul was quitting its earthly tenement. She lay for a long, long time as if asleep. At last some one suggested that her sleep was the sleep of death. Her husband seized her hand convulsively at the thought ; his grasp was faintly but distinctly returned, thrice ; that was the last sign which she gave, at once of life and of that enduring love, which, surviving the grave, was perhaps, as a guardian spirit, to guide her beloved through that path of life which her departure had left so gloomy, until it should finally hail with celestial joy the moment of their re-union in the world of spirits.

It was long before Frederic William in any measure recovered the shock of Louisa's death. Besides the blank left by the absence of her companionship and sympathy, he had used himself to rely upon her opinion, not only in religious matters, but also upon many an emergency of state. It is said that he used frequently to leave the council table to consult the clear and unbiassed judgment of his wife, and that after her death he used in moments of perplexity to stand before her picture, exclaiming sadly, "Oh, Louisa, Louisa, how sorely do I miss thee !" And still more sorely was he to feel that his loss was an irreparable one, when the inadequacy of the substitute whom he selected to occupy her place became apparent.

Oppressed by the loneliness of his once cheerful home, and anxious to supply to his children the want of a mother's affection and care, he was induced to select in second wedlock, the widowed, and no longer very young, Dorothea of Holstein Glücksburg,* hoping that, from her suitability of age, she might better supply the wants of his family and household than a

* She was the widow of Christian Ludwig of Brunswick Lüneburg Zelle.

younger lady. But in this he was unhappily deceived. Dorothea was comely enough in person; but the qualities of her heart and mind did not answer to those of her appearance; she was worldly, grasping, and ambitious; and her sordid views and mean actions greatly disgusted the people, in whose minds the remembrance of the saintly Louisa still lingered, surrounded with a holy radiance, and from the walls of whose homes her gentle features still smiled in many a portrait. The young princes, too, had cause to rue the day when their father brought a step-mother to his house; but, as I shall have occasion to allude to the Electress Dorothea again in the course of the ensuing narrative, I will here break off this sketch of the early history of the house, merely making a few remarks upon the different phases which may be remarked, both in the political and moral history of Brandenburg Prussia.

Vehse, in the Introduction to his "Prussian Court," divides its history into three periods. The first, dating from the Reformation, he designates the "Mediæval-Theologico-Barbarous" period; the second, including the Thirty Years' War and the northern campaigns, the "partly French-gallant, partly military-absolute;" and the third, from the reign of Frederic the Great, the period of "Enlightenment;" and with this division, the startling changes in the manners and morals of the Prussian Court, which will be remarked in the course of the following pages, will be found nearly to coincide.

Thus, in the times succeeding the Reformation, we find extreme simplicity of manners and life pervading even the immediate precincts of the Court. When Philip Hainhofer visited Berlin, during the reign of the Elector John Sigismund, he remarks that the Electress Anna allowed her children to appear in very mean and ordinary clothing, saying that they were known by all to be of princely birth, and that "virtue and the fear of God were better ornaments for them than mere apparel." Again, we find the Electresses of Brandenburg attending to the affairs of the *ménage*, with as much assiduity as

the wife of any private gentleman, of moderate fortune, could now do.

The Electress Louisa of Brandenburg, as we have seen, was an adept in the mysteries of cooking, as well as in other domestic matters; and even so late as the reign of King Frederic William I., a yearly income of 80,000 Thalers* was assigned to his Queen Sophia Dorothea, on the express stipulation that she should provide clothing and linen for the whole family, including the king himself, who, say the minute historians of the time, chose to have his shirts cut and sewed according to a fashion of his own; whilst Frederic the Great, who after his mother's death discarded all female interference, was reduced to a very tattered and destitute condition in point of linen.

With this primitive simplicity of the mode of life, was almost necessarily combined a vast amount of coarseness, ignorance and superstition. Manners and speech were equally rough and uncouth, and the *quasi* society of the day was disfigured by the odious vice of deep and sottish drinking. Nevertheless, under the reigns of the two first kings of Prussia, the rules of morality were otherwise very strictly observed, at least, in externals; and the utmost deference and respect were paid to religion. But enlightenment and civilization were making rapid strides in all the principal European States; and with them, hand-in-hand, came their too frequent attendants, infidelity and vice.

Already the French capital had established that autocracy of taste and fashion over the rest of the European world, which it has ever since maintained. In Berlin, from causes which will be noticed as they occur, this ascendancy of French taste over the national want of it, asserted itself in an extraordinary degree. The simple German jackdaws imagined, that, by adopting a few of that gay bird's cast feathers, they should become veritable peacocks, and strutted miserable, ragged hybrids, neither German nor French.

* 12,000*l.* sterling.

So violent, at one time, was this Gallic mania, that one lady, we are told, even sent to her *agent des modes* in Paris to procure her a young and handsome French husband, and Frederic the Great congratulates himself and Prussia on the failure of an experiment which might otherwise have reduced the neglected male population of Berlin to another rape of the Sabines!

Meantime in Prussia, as in England, during the reigns of our first Norman kings, French became the language of polite life. The mother tongue, with all its stores of rude opulence, an unwrought mine of goodly ore, was laid aside, as only fit to express the peasant's homely meaning, or to give utterance to his simple prayer; while the gay lordling of the Court was content to lisp, with barbarous accent, the borrowed verbiage of a foreign tongue, whose barren superlatives had no power to convey one tithe of the meaning of the deep and honest German heart.

That strictness of morality and of religious observances, which we have remarked upon as distinguishing the reigns of Frederic I. and Frederic William I., under the godless government of Frederic the Great was not only relaxed, but suddenly and altogether dissolved. The King whom the people loved, the philosopher whom they admired, the hero whom they deified, openly scoffed at religion, and declared that, in his dominions, every man was free to erect his own standard of morality. In the pride of his own strength, he forgot that the multitude must have some great mainstay to which to cling, some common standard round which to rally, if virtue and order are to exist amongst them, even in name.

Ruthlessly then, by his own example, did he fling down the mainstay of religion; wantonly did he trample on that standard of morality, which his own passions were either too cold or too well regulated to require; whilst, by doing so, he rent asunder all those bonds of social order which are dependent upon godliness and virtue.

For a moment, the people were stunned by the fall of all

they were accustomed to venerate ; bewildered by the recoil of the tense cords of discipline thus suddenly snapped asunder,—and then, mad licence ran riot through all ranks.

Sloth, luxury and vice brought enervation, poverty and disease in their train ; and Frederick the Great, towards the close of his reign, stood a dismayed and perplexed spectator of the consequences of his own rash and unholy presumption.

During the reign of his successor, all right feeling was at its lowest ebb, and even decency itself was laughed to scorn ; Malmesbury, in his Despatches, thus depicts the period closely preceding the death of the great Frederic. “Berlin is a town, where, if *fortis* may be translated honest, there is neither ‘*vir fortis nec fœmina casta*,’ a total corruption of morals reigns throughout both sexes, joined to penuriousness, caused partly by the oppression of his present Majesty, and partly by the expensive ideas they received from his grandfather ; thus constituting the worst of human character.”

Strangely enough, in the midst of the materialism and sensuality which debased this period of Prussian history, superstition and mysticism climbed upon the ruins of religion, and built themselves a fantastic temple from the *débris* of the stately pile ; yet even the gibberings of these wan spectres of the truth answered a salutary end, in that they directed men’s minds towards the great imperishable substance of which they were the shadows, and thus prepared a faint track for the social and religious reform of the next reign, when, beneath the fair influence of the gentle, yet heroic queen, and her upright, God-fearing husband, the foully-sullied tissue of the national morality should—

—— “Like the stain’d web whitening in the sun,
Grow pure by being purely shone upon.”

And when the diseased constitution of social and domestic life, healed of its plague by the purifying influence of misfortune, should reassume its healthy, normal condition, and be once more the pride and happiness of an honourable and munificent citi-

zenhood; whilst from that sex whose corruption is the worst symptom of a nation's decay, and who had been so lately stigmatized as "harpies"* of the vilest description, should go forth full many a noble and devoted lady, the prototypes of our own Miss Nightingale, who should account it a privilege to dress with their own white hands the wounds of the common soldier, received in doing manful battle for the rights of the fatherland.

With these remarks I conclude the short outline of the Prussian history and people, which I have thought it necessary to give, before commencing a more detailed account of the lives of the Prussian Queens.

* Malmesbury's Despatches.

LIFE OF
SOPHIA CHARLOTTE,

FIRST QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.

RARELY, indeed, amongst the crowned dwellers of the world's high places, does the pen of the historian find a character upon which to dwell with so much complacency as upon that of Sophia Charlotte, the first, equally well known as the "philosophical," or the "beautiful"* Queen of Prussia, the second wife of Frederic III., Elector of Brandenburg, afterwards King of Prussia.

To the English reader, the interest attaching to her is enhanced, by the fact, that she was descended from one of the royal houses of England, the unfortunate race of Stuart; although upon that branch of the family of which she was a member, fortune, tired of persecuting, seems to have lavished her gifts with a prodigal hand.

Although, no doubt, the generality of my readers are well acquainted with her family connections, yet it may be well, before beginning a memoir of the life of Sophia Charlotte, to take a rapid retrospective glance at the period when the history of her house diverges from that of England.

Elizabeth, daughter of James I. of England, married Frederic V. of Simmern, Elector Palatine, who, it is needless to state, was elected to the throne of Bohemia; her decided and ambitious character no doubt greatly influenced her more timid

* Erman says in his dedication of his "*Mém. pour servir à la Vie de la Reine Sophie Charlotte*," to Louisa of Mecklenburg Strelitz, Queen of Frederic William the Third, "On ne pourra pour l'avenir la reconnaître à la seule denomination de 'la belle reine' qui jusqu'ici suffisait pour la designer."

husband in his acceptance of the royal dignity, although upon the authority of her declaration, that, "if he had not sufficient self-reliance to accept a crown, he should not have wedded the daughter of a king," her grand-daughter, the Duchess of Orleans, casts a doubt. This Princess, with far more than her father's talent and strength of mind, inherited his love of learning to its fullest extent; a linguist, equally conversant with the languages of ancient and modern times, she had even ventured into the more abstruse regions of philosophy, and her acquirements are described as fitted to adorn a man, so varied and so solid was her learning.

She followed her husband, after his fall, into Holland, where he found a refuge at the Court of Maurice, Prince of Orange, and where, until his death in 1628, vain hopes of recovering his lost possessions still flattered the exiled prince. His widow, still called Elizabeth of Bohemia, during her residence first at the Hague, and afterwards at Rhenen in the province of Utrecht, devoted herself assiduously to the education of her daughters, upon whom—as might be expected from the vehemence of her character and the strength of her passions—her care was more judiciously exerted with regard to intellectual, than moral training. Wherever she resided she speedily formed around her a circle into which the charm of her intellect attracted much of the talent and the learning of the day; yet, after the reinstatement of her son Charles as Elector Palatine, we find her, with her ruling passions, a restless ambition, and craving for personal power, still destined to remain unsatisfied, once more in London, where she died in 1662.

Of the thirteen children who were the fruits of her union with the unfortunate Frederic, I shall only notice those who were distinguished by character or position. The eldest son was drowned on the coast of Holland; the second, as we have seen, became Elector Palatine; the third, Edward, who as well as several of his brothers, was obliged to seek a main-

tenance in a foreign service, settled in France, where he embraced the Roman Catholic religion. The gallant Prince Rupert we find maintaining the cause of his house in the civil wars in England, whilst one of his brothers sat in the republican parliament. Philip fell in battle at the age of twenty-three years. There were four daughters, the character of the eldest of whom, Elizabeth, requires a somewhat longer notice. Endowed with more than her mother's intellectual gifts, but with little of her ambition, her sole passion and pursuit was knowledge; whilst still in her childhood she was acquainted with six different languages; and the literature, oratory, and poetry of these not sufficing for the increasing demands of her mental avidity in maturer years, she eagerly embraced the philosophy of Descartes, (then entering upon the zenith of his celebrity,) and thus excited the jealousy of the masculine Christina of Sweden, who could not tolerate the philosopher's expressed admiration of his fair disciple's talents, nor the pure and elevated intercourse and friendship which subsisted between them. Did space permit, I might dwell at far greater length on the character of this gifted lady, who, having fallen under her mother's displeasure, and innocently incurred her suspicions of being privy to her brother Philip's designs against the favourite L'Epinay, was discarded by her, and, after various wanderings, at length found a refuge, and leisure for the full enjoyment of her literary pursuits, as Abbess of Herford in Westphalia. Louisa Hollandina, the second daughter, sought the protection of Louis XIV., and embracing the Roman Catholic faith at the same time with her younger brother Edward, became Abbess of Maubuisson, and during the latter part of her life was as much famed for her austerities, as she had been for the gallantry of her youth.

The third, Henrietta Maria, married Sigismund Ragoczy, Prince of Transylvania. The fourth was Sophia, in whose character were happily blended the opposite tendencies of this richly-gifted race, in whom the strong passions of the one

part of her family were tempered down into a healthy vivacity and innocent love of pleasure, whilst the undue intellectual excitement of the other, in her, became only the legitimate activity of a well-balanced mind. Chevreau, speaking of her in common with her sisters, says that "no finer minds, and no more deeply-learned persons than these, were to be found."

Her attractions made a deep impression upon Ferdinand, King of Rome, brother of Leopold, afterwards emperor; but the untimely death of the suitor prevented the marriage taking place, and in 1568 Sophia became the wife of Prince Ernest Augustus of Hanover, the youngest of the four brothers of that family. His father and uncles had in youth made the singular compact, that to maintain the position of their house, only one of their number should marry, and that one should be decided by lot. The lot fell upon George, the sixth brother, who consequently married, and became the father of Ernest Augustus; and so well did the other brothers maintain their agreement, that Achmet I. said it would repay the journey only to see them.* It was in consequence of this compact that Ernest Augustus became, subsequently, Duke of Hanover. He was pleasing in person, generous and kind in his various relations, and brave in his personal character. In 1662 he was invested with the ecclesiastical principality (Fürstbisthum) of Osnabruck, agreeably to the peculiar conditions of the treaty of Westphalia, by which it was stipulated that a Roman Catholic and a Protestant Bishop should alternately hold possession of the see, and that the latter should always be a prince of the House of Hanover.

Although at the time of their marriage neither Ernest Augustus nor Sophia had any great expectations, indeed fifty prior claims are said to have intervened between the latter and the throne of her ancestors, yet he, in course of time, became duke, and subsequently Elector of Hanover; whilst Sophia was

* "The Georgian Era."

ultimately called to the succession of the throne of England, and had she survived but a few months longer, her name would have stood enrolled amidst the list of the sovereigns of our island.

The first child of this union was George I. of England, the fourth was Sophia Charlotte, the future Queen of Prussia, the subject of this memoir. She was born at the Castle of Ibürg, in the diocese of Osnabrück, on the 10th of October, 1668. Upon this, her only daughter, Sophia lavished the utmost tenderness of a mother's heart, and delightedly occupied herself in forming the mind of her beautiful child, and storing it with the first seeds of that rich and abundant knowledge which was afterwards to render her the admiration of Europe. And very amply was her maternal solicitude repaid by the tender and life-long affection of her daughter, whom it is pleasant to find in after life, during her frequent visits to Hanover, escaping from the tiresome ceremonial of her own Court, to take refuge in her mother's loving arms, and in the unrestrained freedom of her early home. Sophia's choice of a governess for her young daughter was justified by her own intimate knowledge of, and friendship for the Frau von Harling, to whose charge she had already committed the education of her niece Elizabeth Charlotte (who had been entrusted by her father, the Elector Charles Louis, to his sister's care, and who in 1671 became Duchess of Orleans). Aided by this lady Sophia proceeded to carry out a system of education, in the course of which, besides French, the young Princess was instructed in English and Latin, and also in music, for which she had a passionate love, and in which she afterwards excelled both as a performer and a composer. Even as a child, her eager thirst for knowledge, and the germ of her future tendency to philosophical research, was shown by her earnest inquiries into the nature and causes of things, a peculiarity which still marked her mind in its maturity, when we find Leibnitz reproaching her with her wish to know the "*Pourquoi du pourquoi.*" The happiest part of

Sophia Charlotte's life, her carefully and lovingly-guarded childhood and early youth, passed but too rapidly amidst the pleasant gardens of Herrenhausen, her mother's residence.

In 1679 Ernest Augustus, by the death of his brother, was unexpectedly called to the succession of the duchy of Hanover, and from this period his Court became one of far greater pretensions than heretofore. By virtue of this inheritance also, the celebrated Leibnitz became his subject, an acquisition in itself invaluable to the then Court of Hanover, and more especially so to the young Princess, whose rapidly developing powers were still further stimulated by her intercourse with this great man.

After the peace of Nimeguen, in the year 1680, Ernest Augustus, accompanied by his wife and daughter, made a journey to Italy, to be present at the carnival at Venice. The effect of this visit to a land, so rich in objects of art and classical interest, upon a mind like that of Sophia Charlotte, may be easily conceived; it refined her taste, and matured her judgment in matters of art, and fostered the love of music already so strong in her. The subsequent residence of the Abbate Hortensius Mauro at her father's Court maintained in her mind the taste for the fine arts thus engendered.

In the summer of 1681, at the baths of Pymont, took place her first meeting with Frederic, electoral Prince of Brandenburg, who had brought thither his wife, Elizabeth Christina of Hesse Cassel, for the benefit of her health, which was then in a declining state. Even then it appears that Frederic was struck with the beauty and rising talent of the young Princess of Hanover.

In the winter of 1682 she visited Berlin with her parents, at the invitation of the great Elector, whom policy, as well as family connections, led to keep on good terms with the house of Brunswick.

In 1683 took place the journey of Sophia and her daughter to France, whither the former's affectionate attachment to her

sister, the Abbess of Maubuisson, and her nieces, the Duchess of Orleans and the Princess of Condé, (daughter of her brother Edward and the Princess of Gonzaga,) had long attracted her; and the year which they spent at the French Court was passed in the fullest enjoyment of the resumption of these family ties.

The Duchess of Orleans, who, proud of her German origin, and still speaking and writing her German mother tongue, appears, amidst the shameless immorality of the French Court, to have led a life of unswerving rectitude, though her letters partake but too strongly of the licence of the age, gives so *naïve* a description of her own personal appearance that I cannot here do better than quote it. "I cannot fail to be very ugly; I have little eyes, a short, thick nose, long thin lips, great hanging cheeks, and a large face; yet I am of very small stature, short and fat: sum total, I am a little fright. If I had not a good heart no one could endure me. To know whether my eyes give promise of *esprit*, it would be necessary to examine them with a microscope, or spectacles, otherwise it would be difficult to judge." She also, together with some rather startling anecdotes, furnishes a few traits of the character of the Abbess of Maubuisson. "She was amiable and agreeable to the highest degree; I was never weary whilst with her. I asked her how she could tolerate the monastic life. She answered, laughing, 'I only speak to the nuns to give them my orders.' She had a deaf nun in her room in order to prevent the necessity of speaking. She said that having always liked a country life, she could now quite fancy herself a country girl. 'But,' asked I, 'how about getting up in the night to go into the church?' She answered with a smile that 'Painters use the shadows to throw out the lights of their pictures.' This lady was herself a painter of no mean order; in her seventy-seventh year she painted the Golden Calf of Poussin, for her sister Sophia. She used to present her pictures to her own abbey and the churches in the neighbourhood.

At the age of eighty she could still see to read the

smallest print without spectacles, and had "all her teeth, though worn out, in her head." She died in 1709, aged eighty-six.

The Court of France in its then existing state was, perhaps, the vilest sink of iniquity in the world ; yet hither it was the fashion to send the ripening youth of Germany to form their manners and their taste, and even Sophia of Hanover did not hesitate to expose the fresh mind of her young daughter to the influence of this polluted atmosphere ; fortunately the virgin soil thus hazarded was too pure for the growth of the rank weeds of French fashionable vice, and Sophia Charlotte returned to Hanover uncontaminated by the taint of evil example. Nevertheless, this sojourn at the French Court gave the young Princess a decided preference for the apparent refinement and the polish, superficial though it might be, of the French manners and language, and caused her to hail with delight the society of French refugees which greeted her on her arrival at Berlin. Her beauty, wit, and freshness seem to have created quite a sensation among the *blasé* courtiers of Versailles ; Louis XIV. himself was delighted with her, and expressed his wish to provide her with a French husband ; Pöllnitz and Erman say that the Dauphin was to have been the husband in question, but as the Dauphiness was then living, and did not die until 1690, that could scarcely have been the case ; this also makes it unnecessary that the journey already mentioned to the carnival at Venice should have been undertaken by Ernest Augustus, as the former states, with the kind intention of consoling his wife and daughter for the disappointment of their French matrimonial views. It is said that Frederic the Great supposed the Duke of Burgundy, the second Dauphin, to have been the destined husband ; but it seems more likely that no particular person was fixed upon, although there is no reason to doubt that both mother and daughter would have favoured a French alliance ; the plan was however, probably on political grounds, suffered to drop.

In the spring of the year 1684 Sophia and her daughter returned to Hanover, and Ernest Augustus, but this time unaccompanied by the fair companions of his former journey, made another visit to Italy, having engaged to assist in supplying money to defray the expenses of a war in which Venice had just engaged with the Turks ; it was possibly owing to the absence of his former safeguard that he spent all the money he had destined for that purpose in magnificent entertainments, especially musical ones ; but as there is no evil without its concomitant good, so the Italian Opera, which his prudent minister forthwith established at Hanover, to prevent the recurrence of foreign temptations of the kind, may possibly be thus regarded.

Sophia Charlotte's matrimonial prospects began now to form a subject of serious discussion between her parents, and Frederic, the electoral Prince of Brandenburg, having recently become a widower, policy and family connections, as is but too frequently the case in other than royal marriages, formed an overbalancing weight in their deliberations. Even the Duchess Sophia, though the Prince was in no respect calculated for the husband of her beautiful and talented daughter, and though loving her child intensely as we have seen, thought the match most desirable. Accordingly, when Otto von Grote, the Hanoverian Ambassador at Berlin, returned to negotiate the marriage, the Prussian proposals were well received.

In vain did Frederic's stepmother, the Electress Dorothea of Holstein Glücksburg interpose her usual mischievous interference ; the electoral Prince arrived at Hanover in September, 1684, his father, the great Elector, being detained at Berlin by a fit of gout. The betrothal of the young couple speedily followed. I believe it was during the festivities attendant upon this occasion that a ring worn by Frederic in memory of his deceased wife, with the device of clasped hands and the motto, "A jamais," suddenly broke, which was looked upon as an omen that this union likewise was to be of short duration.

I will now pause to give a description of the bride and bridegroom, as we naturally feel more at home with a character, the fashion of whose outward covering is known to us.

The Princess Sophia Charlotte was of the middle height, her complexion dazzlingly fair; she had large, soft, blue eyes, "eyebrows that seemed drawn by the compass," a well-proportioned nose, a lovely mouth, and perfect teeth, a profusion of raven-black hair, and the most beautiful neck and shoulders in the world; her form rounded in youth, in later life inclined somewhat to *embonpoint*; she was now on the eve of completing her sixteenth year, was agreeable and witty in conversation, sang and played well, danced with much grace, and "knew what very few persons were acquainted with in an age so little advanced as that."*

Her affianced husband, Frederic, was now twenty-seven years of age: when in his infancy, his nurse had let him fall from her arms, the consequence of which infantine misfortune was now apparent in his weakly constitution, his small stature, and his deformity, to hide which as far as possible he wore a large peruke. The same cause may also account for his tendency to melancholy and nervous irritability. He had been carefully educated, contrary to the usual fortune of princes, and owing, perhaps, to his not being the heir apparent; for his elder brother, the high-spirited Carl Emil, who announced that "all who studied and learned Latin were fools," was a fine healthy young man, and there seemed but little probability that the puny Frederic, even should he survive his sickly childhood, would ever be called to inherit the electoral dignity; but during the French campaign of 1674 the hopeful, though fiery and impetuous young electoral Prince was seized with a violent fever, of which he died at Strasbourg, at the age of nineteen; and thenceforth the eyes of the nation were turned solicitously towards the younger brother, upon whom, at the

* Vehse in his *Preusz. Hof.* quotes the *Mercure galant* for a description of Sophia Charlotte. Toland also describes her in his *Tour*.

same time, the reversion of the dignity of electoral Prince drew the invidious attention of his stepmother; and her misrepresentations of him to his father, with whom it was her constant endeavour to embroil him, no doubt increased the tendency to moodiness and suspicion which marked his weak and easily biassed character. Weak I have said he was, and when I add that he was one to whom the sacrifice, which princes are called upon to make of the pleasures of domestic happiness, was not a painful one, who delighted in pomp and parade for its own sake, whose life was a series of ceremonies, without the inner reality which can alone make the outward symbols tolerable, it will at once be apparent how little he was fitted to fill the nearest and dearest of relationships to the warm-hearted, affectionate, and highly-gifted Sophia Charlotte, who, as Pöllnitz says, was led to the altar a victim to the policy of her parents. Nevertheless, to do Frederic justice, through all his ostentation and display, a real love for his people and devotion to their interests may frequently be traced; and in his private capacity he was, though passionate, easily appeased, though fickle and of no great depth of affection, not difficult to live with, and had not Sophia Charlotte despised the part which his favourites unscrupulously adopted, of managing him by his weaknesses, she might have governed both him and his dominions entirely: but she had little ambition to rule, especially if it must be done by meanness and intrigue; and I shall have to record no interference of hers in state affairs, save when, once or twice, her influence was employed at the formal and repeated request of her husband and his minister.

On Sunday the 8th of October (N.S.), 1684, at Herrenhausen, the Princess of Hanover having renounced her profession of the Lutheran for the Reformed Faith, which was that of Frederic, her marriage with the "Prussian Æsop," as she used afterwards to call him, was solemnized with much magnificence: the *Mercure Galant* of December, 1684, has

left us a description of the ceremony, which I abbreviate, in order not to weary the patience of my readers.

There were six services, which not unnaturally appeared very tedious to the Prince; and the Princess, though charming all eyes by her modesty and beauty, was so incommoded by the length of the ceremony, added to the weight of her sumptuous apparel, and of the crown of pearls and diamonds which she wore, that the bridegroom, observing her change colour, anxiously begged the Duchess, her mother, to relieve her of these burdens; she was accordingly led away to her own apartment, and shortly afterwards reconducted, for the completion of the solemnity, attired in a *déshabille*, consisting of a sinarre of gold brocade and flame-colour, in which "simple ornament she looked even lovelier than before." On the 10th of October, the sixteenth birthday of Sophia Charlotte, took place the solemn entry of the bride and bridegroom into Hanover. A ball on the evening of the same day was opened by the ceremony of the Torch dance, an ancient custom preserved in Germany on the occasion of royal marriages; it was performed in the following manner:—

Six gentlemen of the Court of Hanover, and six gentlemen of the electoral Prince's train, each holding a lighted flambeau of wax, six feet long, formed a procession. The bride and bridegroom placed themselves in the centre, and led off the dance; the Duke of Hanover then took the place of the electoral Prince, and the Duchess that of the Princess, whilst the Prince of Hanover took that of the Duke, and so on in rotation, till everybody had changed places with everybody else. This dance, which lasted for two hours, was performed to the sound of trumpets, violins not being admitted.

A week after this torch dance Frederic returned to Berlin, his bride accompanying him only as far as Burgsdorf, where the Duke of Zell gave a banquet in their honour; she then returned to Hanover, where she remained with her mother for six weeks longer, before she rejoined her husband; and there let us leave

her, while we take a short survey of the State and Court of Berlin, her future residence.

It has been before stated that on the accession of Frederic William, the great Elector, in 1640, he found his territory devastated by the ravages of hostile troops, and its resources drained by the terrible Thirty Years' War; his capital in ruins, the greater part of the houses, which were built of wood, abandoned for the want of inhabitants; the population decreased to between six and seven thousand; the streets unpaved, the bridges out of repair; public buildings there were few or none. The remaining inhabitants gained a livelihood by keeping and fattening cattle, the state of the streets may therefore be more easily imagined than described. Before the door of each house were uncleansed stables, tainting the air with the most intolerable effluvia. Like Paris, in the time when the eldest son of Louis le Gros met his death by a pig's running between his horse's legs, the streets swarmed with these animals, and were impassable from the accumulations of filth and refuse caused by them; and even so late as the year 1671, a decree was passed ordaining that every peasant who came to market, should, on his return, carry away with him a cart-load of these abominations; and the law forbidding the citizens any longer to feed or fatten cattle within the precincts of the town was not passed until ten years later.

Under the roof of the electoral palace were comprised, not only the mint, and the courts of justice, but also the prisons, and even the place of execution, until, in 1648, the Elector expressed his determination no longer to have prisoners within the walls that sheltered himself and his family.

Happily for the great Elector, when the plague broke out in Brandenburg in 1634, he had been sent into Holland,* where a prospect, widely different from the narrow horizon which limited the Court of his weak-minded father, opened upon his view. In

* See Introductory Chapter.

the midst of a land which had won, and still maintained its cherished freedom by its own heroic efforts, what better school could have been found for that expanding mind, which was one day to wrest from unwilling Europe the materials for a new and powerful kingdom?

From the time that Frederic William left the death-bed of his father, to become his successor, his life was one vast effort for the accomplishment of his great end—the amelioration and aggrandizement of his people and his country.

The peace of Westphalia gave him leisure, amongst other reforms, to improve the state of the capital, to which end he employed Giromela, Roe Guérin, and others of the most celebrated architects of the day; and so far had he succeeded in his object, that Patin, a French traveller, in 1672, describes the sight of Berlin as alone repaying him for all his fatigues, and that town itself as “une ouverture au ciel d’où le soleil faisait sentir ses rayons à ce territoire.”

Nor must I omit here to mention the great and beneficial effect produced about this time, by the settlement of great numbers of French religious refugees in Berlin. Whilst Louis XIV., giving way to that intolerant spirit which shortly afterwards dictated the revocation of the edict of Nantes, was thus depopulating France of her best and most industrious subjects, Prussia was profiting in a fully equal ratio, in return for the asylum which she afforded to the Huguenots.

Here, as in other places, where similar colonizations took place, the introduction of various kinds of industry marked the footsteps of the emigrants; and Berlin, which, a few years before, had been so unimportant a town, that the tourist thought it not worth while to turn out of his road to visit it, now with her beautiful public buildings, her manufactures of silk and woollen, her fabrics of gold, silver, leather and porcelain, began to assume the state of a flourishing city of no mean commercial importance.

Some writers ascribe to the French immigration and conse-

quent mixture of races, almost as great an influence upon the people of Prussia, as that which the Norman Conquest exercised upon our Anglo-Saxon forefathers in England ; at all events, the result was soon perceptible enough, in the general adoption of the French language and manners, and, I fear we must add, vices also, in many cases. This is the less surprising, if we reflect, that, when immediately after the revocation of the edict of Nantes, Frederic William formally offered the Huguenots a refuge in his dominions, the number who took advantage of his invitation amounted to twenty thousand, and that, therefore, although the number of the inhabitants had increased three-fold since 1640, certainly near half of the population of Berlin must have been French.

Of course the effects of such an ingress of foreigners could not be wholly beneficial ; many of them were the merely idle and curious, who preferred begging to taking up any trade ; and probably the first seeds of that terrible deterioration of manners and morals, which we shall have occasion to notice in the next century, may be traced back to this period ; for though the generality of the French Huguenots affected even a somewhat austere demeanour,—to distinguish themselves yet the more from the Roman Catholics of the Court, the licentiousness of whose manners was the scandal of Europe,—and though Frederic William in 1686 passed a decree, which was again enforced by both his son and grandson, forbidding his subjects to send children, in compliance with the existing French mania, to learn the “great airs” of the Court of France, and many worse things besides, yet, even so soon afterwards as 1698 appeared a publication with the title “The German French Mania, whoso reads will understand,” protesting with strong conservative and patriotic disgust, against the encroachments of the French fashions, and the “proud, false, and licentious French spirit, which, as erst the serpent lulled our first parents in Paradise, with caressing words and flattering speech,” was luring on the Prussians to the destruction of their “dear

German freedom." It also laments the already prevalent foreign vices which disfigured the primitive simplicity of the German manners, whilst it ridicules with broad humour the absurd spirit of imitation which prevailed in all classes, and which, supposing a suitor to be arrayed in French hat and vest, would atone in his fair lady's eyes for a "crooked hawk's nose, calf's eyes and a hump," and make even bandy legs tolerable so long as they were clad in French "fashionable stockings."

But to return to Sophia Charlotte. She was accompanied by her mother and eldest brother, (the future king of England,) on her journey to Berlin, where she arrived on the 2nd of November, and the next day entered the city in state with her husband. She was cordially received by her father-in-law, the great Elector, who during the short remainder of his life always testified the utmost kindness and affection for her. She also maintained a footing of at least apparent friendliness with the Electress, whose character is not painted in the brightest of colours by the historians of the day. She was even accused of having administered poison to the electoral Prince himself, in a cup of coffee, and to his brother Louis in an orange, presented to him at a ball given at her residence, in order to make way for her own favourite son, Philip William of Schwedt.

But though Prince Louis did die suddenly, and though sundry unpleasant allusions were made to the actions of Agrippina and Locusta in the rumours with which the gossip of the time was rife, yet, as these accusations have been perpetuated by the pens of those who, for family reasons, bore no good-will to the memory of the Electress, we may at least hope that they were unfounded, more especially, as the same writers allow, that although she did not belie the commonly-received idea of a stepmother's love, at least she was a virtuous wife, and a tender mother to her own children. She had great influence over the Elector, in the then weak and declining state of his health. His descendant, Frederic the Great, speaks of him as having "no weaknesses, save for wine and his wife." This latter

foible applies, no doubt, to Dorothea, and not to Louisa of Orange, of whose pure and elevated character a sketch has already been given.

The only occasion on which the Electress Dorothea seriously interfered in the affairs of Sophia Charlotte was at the period of an accouchement, probably her first, to which I shall have occasion presently to refer.

The electoral Prince had now a separate residence, household, and body-guard allotted to him. Of his domestic life with Sophia Charlotte but little can be said, as though troubled by no quarrels, it was at the same time brightened by no affection. The marriage, as we have seen, was not one of inclination, on her side at least, nor does any attachment, as is sometimes the case, appear to have resulted. She was uniformly cold and reserved in her intercourse with him, perhaps because, with her usual sincerity, she feared leading him to imagine that she felt any greater warmth of sentiment than really existed for him in her heart; and he, who had admired her beauty, and felt for her, at first, as strong a passion as his nature was capable of, finding that his advances met with no return, soon likewise subsided into indifference. It is to be feared that her feeling for him partook at length more of the nature of contempt than of this merely negative quality, for upon one occasion, at a later period, when Leibnitz had sent her a paper upon "*les infiniment petits*," she is said to have exclaimed, "Does he think that the wife of Frederic I. can need a dissertation upon '*infinite littleness*?' "*.

Differing then, as the husband and wife did, in every sentiment, it is not surprising that they soon seldom met, save upon state occasions; and after the death of Frederic William, such innovations had Sophia Charlotte made upon the primitive

* Thiebault in his "*Mém. de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin*," gives this anecdote, but a letter from Sophia Charlotte to Mlle. Pöllnitz contains the following passage: "*Dernièrement Leibnitz m'a fait une dissertation sur les infiniments petits, qui mieux que moi, ma chère, est au fait de ces êtres ?*"

customs of the Court of Berlin, that those who were leaving a *soirée* of the Electress were just in time for the *levée* of the Elector. The French colony, as it was called, at Berlin, where many persons of high education and great superiority of intellect were to be found, was a great resource to Sophia Charlotte; and with a woman's ready sympathy for misfortune superadded to her enjoyment of their society, she speedily drew around her a circle of these illustrious exiles, and fixed certain days for receiving them at her residence of Lützelburg, when all court ceremony was laid aside, and the ladies were expected to appear dressed in black, to avoid the expense of less simple attire. Card-playing was interdicted on these occasions, needlework and conversation being the occupation and amusement of the day, whilst French was the only language spoken. It is related that one of the most distinguished of the emigrants, hearing the Princess conversing with so pure an accent in his own language, asked the historian Gregorio Leti, (likewise a religious refugee,) whether she could speak German.

The time for the electoral Princess's approaching confinement* being now at hand (1686), she most earnestly desired to be at Hanover with her mother during that period; but to this very natural wish the Electress Dorothea opposed her ill offices with the Elector, and the projected journey appears to have become a flight, and that undertaken at so late a period, that the Princess was taken ill and obliged to stop upon the road, at no great distance from Berlin, and being taken into the house of a village schoolmaster, there gave birth to a son. The child was baptized three days afterwards at Berlin, by a name, the uncertainty of which is of small moment, as it only lived three months.

In the following year, 1687, took place the death of the unfortunate Prince Louis, to which we have before alluded, and which so greatly increased the unpopularity of the Electress.

* Several historians differ as to whether this episode took place at this or a subsequent accouchement. I have followed Varnhagen von Ense.

He had married a rich Polish princess of the house of Radezwil, in opposition to his stepmother's wish that he should take to wife a niece of her own ; (who subsequently became Duchess of Holstein Beck.) This lady had the credit of presenting him with the particularly fine orange which was reported to have caused his death.

Sophia Charlotte this year accompanied her husband to Leipzig, and it was during this visit that she is said so cruelly to have bewildered the erudite Carpzow, by speaking to him of more books, with the contents, as well as titles of which she appeared to be perfectly familiar, than that learned man could remember having even heard of. An anecdote is also related of her, that another very learned man, having long and vainly sought for the name of a place upon the map of Asia, she quickly solved his difficulty by showing it to him upon that of Africa.

On the 16th of February, 1688, the last birthday of the great Elector, his indisposition assumed an alarming character, and it soon became evident that his days were numbered. During the latter part of his illness he dismissed the Electress from her attendance upon him, and desired that his son Frederic and Sophia Charlotte should remain with him till his death, which took place in the month of May. The electoral Prince left Potsdam, the usual residence of the Elector, for Berlin the same evening. Freytag, the Austrian ambassador, had set off to Potsdam, to congratulate him upon his accession, but found the gates of the capital closed against all egress. This was probably the first time that an Austrian ambassador had ever experienced the possibility of a door being closed upon him in the electorate of Brandenburg.

The new Elector received the oaths of fealty on the 14th, and very different was the inheritance to which he succeeded, from the barren waste of sand and fir trees, depopulated towns, and poverty-stricken peasantry which had been the patrimony of his father ; and fortunate, indeed, for him, and for the country was it, that he succeeded Frederic William, and not

George William, or Brandenburg would have still been in the eighteenth century the same petty principality which it was in the beginning of the seventeenth ; and Frederic the Great would, in all probability, have been but little in a condition either to wrest Silesia from the hands of the Empress queen, or having done so, to stand, as he did, alone against the attack of the combined powers of Europe.

But now, with trade and cultivation in a comparatively flourishing state, and with finances which were able to supply even the boundless expenses of his craving for magnificence, the Elector Frederic III. may be said to have commenced his reign under the most flattering auspices.

Amongst his first acts was one dictated by a spirit of forgiveness which it would be unjust not to notice. In spite of her past attempts against him, he gave orders that the utmost deference and respect should be paid to the Electress Dowager, and arranged with great care for the settlement of her daughters. She only survived her husband about one year.

To Sophia Charlotte the change in her position perhaps made almost less difference than to any other person concerned in it. For power she had no wish, and save that her court was enlarged, and that she had to endure more of the tedium of court ceremony, she made but little change in her manner of life.

Amongst the ladies of her train, she was fortunate in numbering one whom she regarded in the light of a most intimate friend. This was the Fräulein Pöllnitz, the cousin of the tourist,* who describes her as nearly equalling her mistress in beauty and wit, and as possessing a highly-cultivated mind ; and although the Margravine of Baireuth does describe her as

* The Baron de Pöllnitz, Gentleman of the Chamber and Chamberlain during the reigns of the three first kings of Prussia, and author of "*Mém. pour servir à l'Hist. des quatres derniers Souverains de Brandebourg*," and of a tour through most of the countries of Europe. I shall have occasion to refer to him frequently in the ensuing history.

intriguing, venomous of tongue, and having but three little foibles, "the love of play, men and wine," yet as this less flattering description was made in 1722, when, as the Duchess of Orleans says of the same lady, she had fully tried St. Paul's maxim, that he who marries does well, but he who marries not does better; and as the occasion on which the Margravine became acquainted with her was one upon which Mademoiselle Pöllnitz was despatched from Hanover, on the invidious errand of ascertaining whether that Princess was crooked, pock-marked, and a fool, whilst she seemed very much inclined to discover those defects, whether they existed or not, we shall probably not err in supposing the Margravine's graphic picture of her to be a little caricatured. However this may be, Fräulein Pöllnitz was indispensable to Sophia Charlotte; even Fräulein Bülow, though likewise a great favourite, had only "*de ce gros bon sens qui ne marche qu'en bottes fortes*,"* and could not compensate for the absence of La Pöllnitz, with her subtle wit, and her keen sense of the ridiculous, which enabled her to find food for laughter with her mistress, in the petty vexations and absurdities which annoyed the latter when deprived of this resource; a lively correspondence was therefore kept up during any temporary absence of the maid of honour from her post, as a specimen of which I will transcribe part of the same letter from which I have just quoted. "Certain philosophe abhorre le vide, et moi chère Pöllnitz le plein. J'avais hier à ma cour deux dames, La B— et la Y, grosses jusqu'aux dents, maussades jusqu'au sommet et sottes jusqu'aux talons. Mais, ma chère, soupçonnez-vous que Dieu en créant de telles espèces les forma à son image?—Non, il fit un moule tout exprès et très différent pour nous apprendre le prix des grâces et de la beauté par comparaison. Si vous trouvez ceci méchant, je sais à qui je m'adresse; à bon chat, bon rat.—Comme mon esprit est monté aujourd'hui méchamment, il faut poursuivre. J'ai vu deux benêts d'étrangers; si l'or, les galons et les franges dénotaient

* Letter of Sophia Charlotte to La Pöllnitz.

le mérite, rien n'égal égalerait le leur. Mais comme je respecte peu l'opulence, j'ai apprécié leur juste valeur ; je comprends que l'aspect des grands peut intimider, et ôter à l'esprit la facilité de briller et de paraître, et alors j'encourage. Mais lorsque la fatuité s'en mêle, et que la presumption et la sottise veulent usurper l'approbation due au vrai mérite, je suis impitoyable, et je ne fais grâce sur rien. Que la défiance sur ce que nous valons est estimable, mais cette vertu est rare ! Ne croyons nous pas toujours de valoir quelques carats de plus que d'autres ? La vilaine chose que l'orgueil, et pourtant ce sentiment est notre plus fidèle compagnon. Grand Leibnitz que tu dis sur ce sujet de belles choses ! Tu plais, tu persuades, mais tu ne corriges pas—Je suis en train de moraliser, et le concert commence. Le nouveau chanteur doit chanter. Sa reputation l'a précédé : s'il la soutient, que je vais passer agréablement mon temps ! Adieu, adieu, quoi, vous m'arrêtez quand la musique m'attend ! Je sacrifie l'amie aux talens. Adieu, vous dis-je, et cela sans appel.

“ Deux mots, ma chère Pöllnitz ; envoyez ces diamans pour mon brasselet à la Liebman.* Je lui ai donné mes ordres pour la façon. Je n'ai guère de temps ; Madame l'Electrice† est arrivée. Que d'étiquettes à observer ! Ce n'est pas que je haisse le faste, mais je le voudrais indépendant de la gêne—mais que ne voudrais-je pas, et surtout vous, qui me manquez essentiellement !

“ On vous promet certain prince : tant pis et tant mieux ; je me jette dans mon lit. Adieu, bon soir, qu'on tire le rideau, votre reine, votre amie s'endort.”

This letter belongs to a later period than that at which I have inserted it ; it is without date, and is one of those for which Erman was indebted to Frederic William II., who allowed him to have access to all the still existing correspondence of Sophia Charlotte.

In the beginning of August, (the exact date is given differ-

* Wife of Liebman, the court jeweller, a Jew.

† Probably her mother.

ently by different authors,) of the same year in which the great Elector died, occurred the birth of a new electoral Prince, afterwards King Frederic William I., an event which was hailed with the greatest delight by the people, whose hopes of an heir had now been several times disappointed. Public rejoicings took place both in Berlin and Hanover, and the Duchess Sophia herself, hastened over to the bedside of her daughter; so eager was she to behold her grandson, that she scarcely waited to embrace the mother, before she repeatedly asked for the child, and when the healthy, strong-limbed boy was put into her arms, she smothered him with kisses, laughing and crying at the same time, and would scarcely allow him to be taken from her again. The Elector testified his joy in the way in which all his emotions seemed to have found utterance, by a series of very splendid public entertainments. The following year, after a journey to Halle to receive the homage of that town, Frederic, accompanied by the Electress, set off to join his troops, which, in execution of his compact with William of Orange, were assembled upon the Rhine. Sophia Charlotte made a deviation from the route to visit Hanover, rejoining the Elector at Wesel.

During the ensuing warlike operations, and the siege of Bonn, she resided at Cologne, whence she made several excursions, on one of which she visited the Princess Mary of Orange at the Hague, and from this period commenced a sustained correspondence between the two ladies.

One of the events which took place during the siege of Bonn was the death of the Electress Dowager, a loss which few seem to have lamented.

Asfeld, who commanded for Louis XIV., and had bravely held out Bonn to the last, having been obliged to capitulate, the Elector returned to Berlin in November, and indulged in a triumphal entry and a succession of fêtes, which were a delight to his own heart and a weariness to that of his wife.

It was about this time that an accident befell Frederic whilst hunting, which confined him for some days to his bed; and as

Sophia Charlotte attended him in his sick room, we might have supposed that the closer approximation thus induced, and the interchange of attention and care on the one side, and gratitude on the other, would have drawn closer the bonds of affection between the husband and wife; but, alas! the former's foible for ceremony and state had attended him even to his bedside, and they remained as much strangers to each other as ever.

The beginning of the year 1690 was embittered to Sophia Charlotte by the first severe domestic misfortune which she had as yet experienced. This was the loss of her two brothers, Charles Philip and Frederic Augustus, who had served in the Imperial army, and who were cut off within three days of each other; the former, the darling of his mother, fell fighting like a hero, hand to hand with the enemy at Pristina, in Albania, on the 3rd of January, 1690; whilst the latter, the younger and favourite brother of Sophia Charlotte, was killed in Transylvania, where he headed an attempt to drive the Turks from a pass of which they had possessed themselves, December 30, 1689.

The Duchess Sophia was almost crushed by this double misfortune, and her daughter hastened over to Hanover, at once to alleviate her mother's grief by her tender care, and to solace her own by its participation. In the April following she accompanied her mother to Carlsbad for the sake of the Duchess's health, which was greatly affected by the blow she had sustained. It was in a letter of thanks to Leibnitz, for the good news communicated by him of the amendment of her mother's health, that Sophia Charlotte's correspondence with that great man commenced.

As there is nothing in Frederic's journey to Könisberg to be inaugurated Duke of Prussia, in presence of the Polish Ambassadors (that duchy being still dependent upon the kingdom of Poland), which especially relates to the Electress, I pass it over without further notice, and proceed to the year 1691,

when the Elector made his consort a present of the large castle and garden, which afterwards became the residence of Sophia Dorothea, Queen of Frederic William I., and which received from her the name of Monbijou. The district belonging to this castle then included nearly the whole of the land on which now stands the suburb of Spandau with part of Dorotheenstadt; somewhat later also, the ground now occupied by the suburb of Stralau came into her possession. Unlike her predecessor, Dorothea, who caused part of her property to be built upon in order to benefit by the house-rent thus accruing, and who drew considerable profits from a wine and beer house, and a hotel which she caused to be constructed before the Spandau gate to receive the Hamburg merchants, thus greatly aggrieving the hotel-keepers and publicans of Berlin, Sophia Charlotte let this property at a merely nominal ground-rent, sometimes at none at all, as building and garden ground, to the citizens of Berlin. She was greatly and deservedly beloved by them, for she was always ready to hear the petitions of even the humblest and poorest, talking with them gladly, helping them if she could, or at least soothing their troubles, and cheering their hearts with her gentle, kindly words. After her death, until the time of Louisa, wife of Frederic William III., the Prussians had no queen, who was held by them in a measure of love and veneration, in any degree equalling that with which they regarded the memory of Sophia Charlotte.

For her own residence she had chosen the beautifully-situated village of Lützen on the Spree, and having bought the estate of Ruhe-leben; she caused the castle of Lützelburg to be built upon it, in the Italian style, after the designs of Schlüter, whilst a beautiful garden was laid out from the plans of Le Notre; the building was prepared for her reception in 1696, but was not completed during her lifetime. Here, in the society of her chosen friends, Sophia Charlotte flung aside the hateful thralldom of that etiquette which made the ceding

of an arm-chair * matter of a month's negotiation, and a step in precedence a mortal offence, and being allowed to be natural was happy and gay.

The negotiations for the erecting of Hanover into an electorate, which had been for some time pending, chiefly through the medium of the Duchess, who had the affair much at heart, now came to a successful issue, and Ernest Augustus was declared Elector of Hanover in 1692. It was on this occasion that Stepney, the English ambassador at Berlin, addressed the following couplet to the Electress of Brandenburg :—

“ Electoris eras conjux, nunc filia facta es,
Sis modo sera parens, sis quoque sera soror.”

A prophecy which was more than accomplished by the event. After a visit to John George, Elector of Saxony, at Torgau, when arrangements were made for his betrothal with the widowed sister of Frederic, Eleanore of Eisenach, Margravine of Anspach, the Elector and Electress of Brandenburg returned by way of Hanover, to Berlin.

On the 26th of June of the same year, Sophia Charlotte, though in good health, set herself to the task of making her will. Having disposed of all her personal property, and expressed the tenderest affection for her son, she fixes the text of her funeral sermon from the sublime words of St. John ii. 25. “ I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” Though she appears to have had a kind of presentiment that her life would not be a long one, yet the idea of death was never to her accompanied by gloom ; on the contrary, she always looked upon it with a calm, cheerful, somewhat curious eye ; nor did she in the least slacken in her enjoyment of, or interest in, the things of this life, from the reflection that her participation in them might be but short. Shortly afterwards Leibnitz, aware of her love of all

* See Marg. Baireuth's interview with the Empress of Charles VII. After much discussion it was decided that the Empress should only take “a very small chair,” and the Margravine a “dossier.”

matters of scientific interest, sent her a letter descriptive of a fossil tooth found at Brunswick, which was supposed by the vulgar to be the tooth of a giant, but which he, from its structure, believed that of an elephant, or, as the comparative cold of the climate seemed to preclude this idea, that of some marine creature analogous to an elephant. His letter is interesting, as conveying the philosopher's ideas upon a subject so little investigated as the science of palæontology then was. I do not insert it, lest those of my readers to whom such fossil curiosities are merely "dry bones" should find their patience wearied.

The following Christmas was spent by Sophia Charlotte and Frederic at Hanover; they were accompanied by the little electoral Prince, now four years old, on whom both his mother and grandmother doated with an excessive affection, which led to a degree of indulgence, highly prejudicial to so turbulent a spirit as that with which he was endowed. The Electress Sophia entreated so urgently that he might be left under her care, that his mother at length consented, the rather because, owing to the great demands made upon her time by state appearances, &c., and her frequent absences from home, days and even weeks frequently passed in which she was not able to see the child.

I must now no longer omit to give some account of the characteristic childhood of Frederic William I., and of the provision which Sophia Charlotte made for that, in her eyes, all-important object, his education; and if she failed in her efforts to make him all that a prince ought to be, it was rather from over-anxiety than from neglect.

She seems, in common with many learned grown-up persons, who are not much accustomed to the minds of children, to have expected him to view learning, and the means of its attainment, through her own philosophical eyes, forgetting that the intellectual point of sight of a child, falls, as greatly as his stature, below that of an adult, and that to his young and restless mind

and ever-moving limbs, both requiring motion to expand their growth, the acquirement of learning, as a task, is nauseous as is to his palate the physic, which it requires not only gilded cup and sweetmeat, but all his little principles of love and duty to make him swallow: and thus knowledge, beautiful and alluring as it may be made even to the mind of a child, is allowed to be presented dry, withered and unsightly, as if a naturalist should offer his *Hortus siccus* to a child who loves to pluck the gay, glad flowers in sunny meadows, and expect him to behold in its discoloured specimens the same attractive beauty which charms his eye in the living blossoms.

Upon Frederic William, although his constitution was too strong to allow him to become either deformed in body or weak in mind, like the Dauphins of France, the system of education then in vogue, had the effect of making him detest learning and all its appliances; and though in later life the consequences of this injudicious treatment were but too apparent, yet the injustice he did to the memory of his mother, in saying that she was "no good Christian"* for her treatment of, and indulgence towards him, is manifestly owing to the same warp in his mind which induced him to behave with such harshness to his own children. Besides, her extreme indulgence was in part the result of a mistaken idea that by allowing his boisterous disposition to have its full swing, it might become modified more successfully than by restraint and strictness. Several anecdotes are on record of the manner in which she endeavoured to carry out this principle. The Count Christopher Dohna had two sons of about the young Prince's age, and Sophia Charlotte used frequently to have them at the Castle, as playmates for her own son. On one occasion she took them into the Elector's apartment, and told them to make all the noise they could. The three boys, nothing loth to obey, seized upon the great silver bell which was used to summon the attendants, and began to ring with all their might. Both the

* Morgenstern.

Elector and Count Christopher, alarmed at this "Glocken-trio," hastily entered the apartment, and the dismay of the refined courtier may be imagined at beholding the origin of the uproar. However, the *naïve* reply of one of the little Dohnas to the Electress's question, "Who is that gentleman?" (pointing to the Elector,) "Why, the Burgomaster of Mohrung,* to be sure," elicited a smile even on the shocked countenance of the Elector, and set all parties at their ease again.

As we have seen, Frederic William was a strong and healthy child, so that D'Artis, the Court preacher, in his sermon on the death of Prince Louis, said that "everything in the electoral Prince gave cause to hope for a vigorous government." Unlike his father, not only in his sturdy, corporeal frame and rude health, but also in his resolute and obstinate temper, the little Prince soon became what nursemaids call a "tyrant" in the nursery. He was confided to the care of a French lady of the name of Montbail, née Duval, afterwards known as Madame de Rocoulles, and many were the panics into which he threw that good lady and her subordinate, Eversmann, by his juvenile escapades. Once he plunged the whole palace into direful confusion by swallowing one of his silver-gilt shoe buckles, on which occasion we are told that "Madame the Electress uttered cries which would have softened rocks," and which perhaps had that effect upon the offending buckle, for the heir of Prussia escaped with no evil consequence from this misapplication of purposes. Upon another occasion Madame de Montbail having threatened to punish him, he took advantage of her momentary inadvertence to climb upon the parapet outside the window, and declared his intention of throwing himself down unless she remitted the punishment; nor would he come down from his perch until poor Madame de Montbail, terrified at the prospect of such a termination to her office, and well knowing he would put his threat into execution, capitulated in form.

He was as complete a contrast to his father in his detestation

* A small country estate belonging to Count C. Dohna.

of finery as in other things. A splendid brocade dressing-gown being one day brought for his use, he watched his opportunity, and flung it into the fire. These anecdotes, together with a later exploit of his, achieved in company with his cousin, the Prince of Anhalt Dessau, of cutting off the tails of some cows whose herdsmen they found asleep,* may give some idea of the sort of subject which Frederic William presented for the management of his preceptors.

His stay at Hanover was curtailed by his quarrel with his cousin George, son of the electoral Prince of Hanover, afterwards George II. of England. This juvenile strife between the two boys appears to have given rise to a deep-rooted dislike, which lasted the whole of their respective lives.† George of Hanover afterwards gave Frederic William the soubriquet of "the sergeant," whilst Frederic William retaliated by nick-naming his cousin "the dancing-master." George also superseded Frederic William in the affections of his first love, the Princess Caroline of Anspach, and thus, as they both grew up, widened the breach between them.

On the return of the little electoral Prince to Berlin he was replaced under the care of Madame de Montbail, but it was soon apparent that he was by far too boisterous to be controlled by female management, and the choice of a male preceptor became necessary. For this purpose Sophia Charlotte had fixed upon the Count Alexander de Dohna. This gentleman was of a very ancient and noble Swiss family, who had formerly gained too much power in Saxony, and been thence expelled.‡ His father was general in the Dutch service. Dohna was a handsome man, of a stately presence, refined, somewhat austere manners, and highly honourable principles, although

* Vehse.

† Frederic William is said, on his death-bed, to have asked whether it was indispensably necessary that he should forgive all his enemies, and upon being answered in the affirmative, to have turned to his Queen Sophia Dorothea, and said, "Then write to the King of England that I die at peace with him—but wait till I am dead first."—*Malmesbury*.

‡ Vehse, and Dohna's "Memoirs."

of ambitious views. His chief disqualification was an extreme love of economy—some called it avarice—which unfortunately brought out the same already-innate quality in his pupil to an extent that became only too apparent in his after life.

For the appointment of this gentleman Sophia Charlotte applied to the then all-powerful minister Danckelmann, between whom and the Dohnas no love was lost.* Count Christopher tells a story of the Electress's application to Danckelmann for his own appointment to a vacant post at Court, which seems to have been mistaken by some writers for that made with respect to the preceptorship for his brother. I therefore insert it. Danckelmann received the expression of the Electress' wishes with more than his usual coldness and reserve, for she had never much courted him, and he expected to be courted as his due; besides, she was very friendly towards the Dohnas, whom he regarded, with considerable truth, as his enemies. He answered her request, therefore, by making difficulties, and alleged the necessity of consulting the will of the Elector. To his objections she replied, with vivacity, that she was "perfectly aware what he had it in his power to do, and that, therefore, the result would show the extent of his wish to oblige her." Both the Dohnas, thus befriended, were respectively appointed to the posts in question. Count Alexander von Dohna was invested in 1695 with the charge of governor of the young Prince in a very lengthy and elaborate discourse, delivered by Fuchs, to which he replied shortly and simply, by saying he would do his duty to the best of his ability. He proceeded to select, as coadjutors in his task, two gentlemen of the respective names of Rebur and Cramer; the former, a Frenchman, had been tutor to the accomplished young M. de Brand, whose natural talents and amiable disposition happily prevailed over, rather than were cultivated by the education he had received, but whose mental advantages were ascribed by Dohna to his tutor's instructions. This tutor,

* Count Christopher Dohna's "Memoirs."

however, Pöllnitz describes as self-conceited to the point of infatuation, a poetaster, “*faisant le bel esprit*,” but little devoted to his duties, and as wearying the Prince with studies more calculated to disgust, than to inspire him with a taste for them.

Cramer was a German, whose chief characteristic was a mortal hatred of everything French. The *brochure* of the Abbé Bonhours, “Can a German possess intellect?” rankled in his remembrance, and his influence over the mind of his pupil was principally manifested by that antipathy to France and the French people, manners and language, which he had succeeded in instilling into it.

A glance at the great folios, still preserved as mementos of Frederic William’s early studies, would probably make it at once apparent, why, with so many advantages of tuition, and with such a mother, he not only never became a learned man, but even conceived a violent antipathy for learning, and everything belonging to it.

These said folios are in his own boyish hand, written in five columns, and consisting of extracts from the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi; the second column in German, the third in French, the fourth in Latin, &c. It is certainly not wonderful that he should, ever after, have had an extreme aversion to the Old Testament writings, which he would not allow to be read in his presence.

Interesting herself as she did in her son’s education, Sophia Charlotte soon perceived the mistake which had been made in the choice of Rebeur, and would gladly have procured his dismissal; but this could not be accomplished without giving offence to Count Dohna, which she was most unwilling to do. Rebeur was therefore allowed to remain in his office, although it was greatly to the disadvantage of the young Prince. The year prior to this arrangement was marked in Sophia Charlotte’s family by that unhappy series of misrepresentations and mistakes which condemned the innocent and unhappy Sophia of

Zell to the perpetual imprisonment of the Castle of Ahlden. I need not pause to tell the sad and well-known story of her husband's coldness and infidelity; of her outraged wifeness, and alienated affections; nor of the intrigues of Madame Platen, and the murder of the hapless Konigsmark. Her husband's subsequent proposals of reconciliation, and her own indignant rejection of them, accompanied by the words, "If I am guilty, I am unworthy of him—if I am innocent, he is unworthy of me," sufficiently proved Sophia's innocence, both for then and now.*

No very particular events occurred at this period at Berlin; the usual routine of so many state receptions, so many dinners and balls, occupied the Court, and the occasional visit of some distinguished foreigner furnished a new subject of conversation for the courtiers, and a little novelty for the Electress, who delighted in a discussion, and who generally engaged the strangers who visited her Court in some argument which might develop their peculiar ideas upon subjects of common interest. On one of these occasions, a French gentleman propounded certain ideas upon the subject of the merely political institution of marriage, which seemed to her vicious and erroneous, yet which she did not see clearly how to refute. She therefore called up Brunsenius, an ecclesiastic, who chanced to enter; and, having satisfied herself that the arguments of the stranger could be refuted satisfactorily, she led him to resume the discussion with a champion better furnished with weapons than herself, in order to have the satisfaction of hearing the right cause triumphantly vindicated.

Being fond not only of music, but of theatrical entertainments, Sophia Charlotte had prepared, for the eve of Easter of the year 1695, the performance of an opera, in the little theatre within the Castle, where it accordingly took place, to the

* "The Georgian Era." Lord Mahon does not mention the proposals of reconciliation said to have been made by George I. to Sophia, but only alludes to her frequent protestations of innocence.

great satisfaction of all parties concerned. Not so, however, to that of Cochins, the Court preacher, who looked upon it as a dangerous invention of Satan, and as such, loudly calling for reprehension. The next Sunday, therefore, he delivered a very stringent discourse, bearing upon the lamentable falling away of the Court, and of the Electress in particular, in respect of this enormity. But Sophia Charlotte, either too far behind the zealous ecclesiastic in piety, or before him in enlightenment, as opinions may decide, was not only impenitent for her transgression, but actually formed the design, since operas could not be performed, whilst the ban of the Church was thus placed upon them, of subverting the rigid doctrines of the divine, and of even decoying himself into a participation of the dangerous amusement. Consequently, having demonstrated to him with cogent reasoning* that there absolutely was nothing wrong in these representations, she very winningly requested him, not only to be present himself, but to bring his wife and daughter to the next performance, which she was then preparing. However, unfortunately for the success of her scheme, the young Count Dönhoff, who was to take a part in the piece, was, at the same time, preparing for his first communion, under the eye of Cochins, and it so happened that the rehearsals for the opera, and the examinations for the communion came into collision; thus proving beyond all doubt, to the apprehension of the good preacher, that the thing was incontestibly evil; accordingly, the ensuing Sunday, he launched forth upon the heinousness of the sin with greater vehemence than ever; and with such effect, that the Elector caused all the paraphernalia to be dismantled, the stage itself to be broken up, and the boards to be carried away in the night. This little incident, it must be allowed, does equal honour to the sincerity of the fearless preacher, and to the moderation of the Elector, who was willing not only to

* Dohna says that the reasoning employed was contained in a bag of ducats sent by the Elector, but Cochins, hurt by the imputation thus cast upon his integrity, rejected the bribe with indignation.

make a slight sacrifice, but even to thwart the wishes of his wife, rather than wound the conscientious scruples of a good man.

I must pause here a moment, to relate the sad and romantic episode of the marriage and death of the Elector's half-brother, Charles Philip. He had been engaged in military service in Italy, and whilst at Turin had met with the beautiful Madame de Salmour, née Balbiani, for whom he conceived a violent passion. Finding that her favour was not to be obtained by any other than honourable proposals, for she, says Pöllnitz, replied like Catherine de Rohan to Henry IV., that "though she was too poor to be his wife, she was yet of too honourable a house to be his mistress;" he married her privately. The Elector, having heard of the connection which his brother was likely to form, recalled him to Berlin; the Prince, however, took no notice of the summons, and the Elector then commissioned an officer named Hackeborn to arrest him, if necessary; at all events, to bring him to Berlin. Having obtained the permission of the Duke of Savoy, Hackeborn proceeded to execute his painful commission. He surprised the unfortunate young man one morning in the arms of his bride, and produced the order for arrest. The Prince seized his sword, and defended himself desperately. His arm having been wounded in the scuffle, he was disarmed and secured. Torn from the object of his passionate attachment, who was sent immediately to a convent, he refused to allow the bleeding from his arm to be stanchied, until he fainted from loss of blood; fever, induced by the excitement and agitation of his mind, set in, and in five days he was a corpse.

After his funeral his widow was released from her confinement; she subsequently claimed her dowry, and asked the protection of the Emperor: Frederic offered to pay the dowry if she would relinquish the name of Madame de Brandenburg, which she had assumed; but this she refused to do, saying that her honour was of more value to her than any other dowry.

She accordingly retained the appellation, until her marriage with Count Wackerbarth, the Field Marshal of Saxony.*

In 1696 took place that eventful meeting of Frederic with William III. at the Hague, when upon the refusal of the "fauteuil" to the Elector of Brandenburg is said to have depended the future royalty of Prussia. For as in compliance with the etiquette of courts, William thought it incumbent upon him to maintain his royal prerogative, and withhold the fauteuil which would have tacitly placed the Elector upon a footing of equality with himself, the indignity so roused that Prince's feelings and mortified his dominant passion, that, from this moment, he set his heart intently upon the long-revolved project of the erection of Prussia into a kingdom. And though at the ensuing interview at Cleves, upon Frederic's own territory, the chairs were equal, and the King took precedence in nothing save the right hand, yet the iron had entered too deeply into Frederic's small soul for the wound to cease from rankling, and he resolved to move heaven and earth to make himself a king.

On the return of the Elector and Electress, (Sophia Charlotte having spent the time occupied by the Elector in visiting William III., at Hanover,) we are informed that a "Lust Ballet" was prepared at Lützelburg, in which, for the surprise and gratification of his mother, the young Prince was to personify Cupid; a very comical travesty, accustomed as we are to his subsequent character as a man, and considering that the exploits of

* This is Pöllnitz's version of the event, which is, however, differently related by other authors. A scarce book, "*La Guerre d'Italie; ou, Mémoires de Count D—*," gives a detailed account, which states, that the Prince was not wounded, but after the seizure of his bride, betook himself to the siege of Casal, and that he was there overtaken by the fever, which, brought on by rage and despair, terminated his existence.

Another account, composed by a Piedmontese, gives still different particulars; all, however, agree in the facts of the marriage and the death of the Margrave Charles Philip.

Madame de Salmour's son, by her first marriage, was adopted by her third husband, Count Wackerbarth, and bore the name of Wackerbarth Salmour. See Rödenbeck "*Beitrag zur Geschichte Fred. Wilh. des Grossen.*" Churfürsten.

the little Frederic William were generally more characteristic of an infant Hercules than of the little God of love.

A singular historical event occurred in the course of the year 1697, when a great Potentate despatched an embassy to a foreign Power, himself accompanying the mission incognito. I allude to the famous tour of Peter the Great, who, as he stated in the instructions of his ambassadors, having reflected that he was wholly indebted to foreign engineers for the capture of Asow, had resolved to acquaint himself personally with the various branches of mechanics necessary for the improvement of his army, navy, and empire generally, in those countries in which they had attained the greatest perfection. Frederic was very much flattered by the application of the Czar for permission to enter his dominions, and arranged to receive the embassy in person at Königsberg, inconvenient though it was in point of expense, with all imaginable magnificence.

The officers who were charged with the preparations, were ordered to make them upon as grand a scale "as if the Czar in person were to be entertained;" great, therefore, was the splendour of the Elector and his attendance, very gorgeous the robe of scarlet in which his person was arrayed to receive the Genevese Le Fort and the Prince Alexiowitz Goloffkin with their *cortège* of shaven-headed, half-savage Russian lords, in long furred robes, all glittering with "barbaric pearls and gold."

The Czar himself dined with Frederic in private more than once; upon one of these occasions an attendant having let fall a plate, the clatter thus produced so startled the Czar, that he jumped up seizing his sword, and it required Frederic's earnest assurances that no danger was to be apprehended in his dominions, to persuade him that an assault upon his person was not intended. He was very curious about the German manners and customs, and inquired particularly into the nature of their punishments. Upon hearing that malefactors were broken upon the wheel, he expressed a great desire to witness this punishment; he was told that there was, at that time, no criminal

in the prisons who was amenable to such a sentence. The most natural and easy expedient in the world immediately suggested itself to surmount this difficulty. "Why not take one of my people?" said the Czar; and great was the difficulty of persuading him, that this so laudable desire for knowledge could not be satisfied, at least on German ground.

The Electress was particularly desirous to see this far-famed half-savage genius, but unfortunately, during his visit to Berlin, she was staying at Hanover. She therefore accepted joyfully the offer which the Privy Councillor, Paul Fuchs, who was present at the reception at Königsberg, made her, to describe by letter all the circumstances which took place. I quote from her letter to him upon the occasion, as Sophia Charlotte always expresses her sentiments in a manner which is peculiarly her own. "*L'offre que vous me faites de me donner une relation exacte du voyage du Czar, je l'accepte de bon cœur, car sans que j'ai cela de commun avec toutes les femmes, d'être curieuse, il me semble que cela est aussi plus permis sur cette matière que sur aucune autre, car le cas est fort rare de voir le maître inconnu avec son ambassade, ce qui jusqu'ici n'a été pratiqué que dans les romans. Je regretterai fort de ne pas le voir, et je voudrais que l'on le persuadât de passer par ici, non pas pour voir mais pour être vu, et nous épargnerions avec plaisir ce qu'on donne pour les bêtes rares pour l'employer en cette vue.*"*

In a subsequent letter of May 28th to Fuchs, she thanks him for his readiness to oblige her, and for the minuteness of his relation, and concludes by hoping that the Czar's visit, though rather expensive and inconvenient to the Elector now,

* I heartily accept your offer to give me an exact narration of the Czar's journey, for besides being, in common with the rest of my sex, endowed with curiosity, it appears to me to be more allowable in this matter than any other, for it is a very uncommon case to see the master incognito with his embassy, and one which hitherto has only been carried out in romances. I shall regret very much not to see him, and I wish he could be persuaded to pass this way, not to see, but to be seen; and we would spare with pleasure what one gives for rare beasts to employ it with this view.

will be a great advantage to him in future, and by regretting much “qu’il ne vienne pas ici avec son ambassade; et quoique je suis ennemie de la malpropreté, la curiosité l’emporte pour ce coup.”

In another letter, dated 10th June, she still hopes that at least, in travelling by land, for safety, he may visit Berlin, and that his favourites the ambassadors will induce him to do so.

On his journey to Amsterdam, Sophia Charlotte’s desire to see this “wonderful beast of the age,” as Vehse calls him, in allusion to the foregoing letter, was fully gratified: at her own and her mother’s request, he consented to meet the two Princesses at Koppenbrück, about four German miles from Hanover. In a letter to Fuchs, dated July 17th, she thus describes the interview:—

“A présent je puis vous rendre le pareil Monsieur, car j’ai vu le grand Czar. Il m’avait donné rendezvous à Coppenbrugge, où il ne savait pas que toute la famille serait, ce qui fut cause qu’il fallait traiter une heure pour nous le rendre visible; à la fin il s’accorda que Monsieur le Duc de Celle, ma mère, mes frères, et moi, le viendrions trouver dans la salle où l’on devait souper, et où il voulut entrer en même temps par une autre porte, pour n’être pas vu, car le grand monde qu’il avait aperçu sur un parapet en entrant, l’avait fait ressortir du village. Madame ma mère et moi commençames à faire notre compliment; et il fit repondre M. le Fort pour lui, car il paraissait honteux, et se cachait le visage avec la main—‘ich kann nicht sprechen’—mais nous l’apprivoisâmes d’abord, et il se mit à table entre madame ma mère et moi, où chacune l’entretint tour à tour et ce fut à qui l’auroit. Quelquefois il repondit lui-même, d’autres fois il le laissait faire à deux truchemens, et assurément il ne dit rien que de fort à propos, et cela sur tous les sujets sur lesquels on le mit, car la vivacité de madame ma mère lui a fait bien des questions, et je m’étonne qu’il ne fut pas fatigué de la conversation, puisque l’on dit que ce n’est pas fort en usage dans son pays. Pour ses grimaces, je les me suis

imaginées pires que je ne les ai trouvées, et quelques unes ne sont pas en son pouvoir de corriger. L'on voit aussi qu'il n'a pas eu de maître pour apprendre à manger proprement, mais il y a un air naturel et sans contrainte dans son fait qui m'a plu, car il a fait d'abord comme s'il était chez-lui, et après avoir permis à tous que les gentilshommes qui servent puissent entrer et toutes les dames qu'il avait fait du commencement difficulté de voir, il a fait fermer la porte à ses gens et a mis son favori, qu'il appelle son bras droit ; auprès, avec ordre de ne laisser sortir personne, et a fait venir de grands verres, et donné trois à quatre coups à boire à chacun, en marquant qu'il le faisait pour leur faire honneur. Il leur donnait lui-même le verre, quelqu'un le voulut donner à Quirini (Sophia Charlotte's page), il le reprit dans ses mains et le remit lui-même dans celles de Quirini, ce qui est une politesse à laquelle nous ne nous attendions pas. Je lui donnai la musique pour voir la mine qu'il y ferait, et il dit qu'elle lui plaisait, surtout Ferdinando, qu'il recompensa comme les messieurs de la cour avec un verre. Nous fûmes quatre heures à table pour lui complaire, à boire à la Moscovite, c'est à dire tous à la fois et debout, à la santé du Czar. Frederic ne fut pas oublié, cependant il but peu. Pour le voir danser, je fis prier. M. le Fort de nous faire avoir ses musiciens qui vinrent après le repas, où il ne voulut pas commencer qu'il n'eût vu auparavant comment nous dansions, ce que nous fîmes pour lui complaire, et pour le voir faire à lui aussi. Il ne put, et ne voulut pas commencer qu'il n'eût des gants, et il en fit chercher par tout son train sans pouvoir en trouver. Madame ma mère dansait avec le gros commissaire (Golofkin), et devant M. le Fort menait le tout avec la fille de la Comtesse Platen, et le Chancelier (Wotznicin) avec la mère ; cela alla fort gravement, et la danse Moscovite fut trouvée jolie. Enfin tous furent fort contents du grand Czar, et il le parut aussi ; je voudrais que vous le fussiez aussi de la relation que je vous en fais. Si vous le trouvez à propos vous pouvez en divertir Monsieur l'Electeur. En voilà assez

pour vous lasser, mais je ne saurai qu'y faire ; j'aime à parler du Czar, et si je me croyais, je vous dirai plus que—je reste bien affectionnée à vous servir,

“SOPHIE CHARLOTTE.

“P.S.—Le fou du Czar a parce aussi, qui est bien sot, cependant nous avons eu envie de rire de voir que son maître prenoit un grand balai et se mit à le balayer.” *

* This and the preceding letters are copied from Erman's “Mém. pour servir à l'Hist de S. C.”

“At present I can return your good offices, sir, for I have seen the great Czar. He gave me the rendezvous at Coppenbrugge, but he did not know that all the family would be there, for which reason we had to treat for an hour before he would consent to make himself visible ; finally, he conceded that M. le Duc de Celle, my mother, my brothers, and myself should meet him in the hall where we were to sup, whither he would come himself by another door, in order not to be seen, for the concourse of people whom he had observed assembled upon the parapets on entering the village, had caused him to leave it again as quickly. Madame my mother and I began to pay him our compliments, and he made M. le Fort reply for him, for he appeared bashful, and hid his face with his hand—“ich kann nicht sprechen”—but we soon tamed him, and he seated himself at table between madame my mother and me, whilst each of us conversed with him by turns, as either wished it. Sometimes he replied himself, at others he allowed two interpreters to do it, and certainly he said nothing which was not very much to the purpose ; and that upon all subjects on which he was tried, for the vivacity of madame my mother suggested all sorts of questions ; and I am astonished that he was not fatigued with the conversation, since it is said that it is not very much the custom in his country.

“As to his grimaces, I had imagined them to be worse than I found them ; some of them it really is not in his power to correct. It may be seen that he has not had a master to teach him to eat with cleanliness, but there is a natural and unconstrained air about him which pleased me, for from the first he acted as if he were at home, and after having given permission for all the gentlemen in attendance to enter, as well as all the ladies whom at first he had made a difficulty about seeing, he ordered his people to shut the door, and placed his favourite, whom he calls his right arm, near it, with orders not to let any one leave the room. He then ordered great glasses to be brought and gave three or four cups of wine to each of them to drink, remarking that he did so to do them honour ; he gave them the glass himself ; some one was about to give it to Quirini (Sophia Charlotte's page), but he took it back into his hand, and placed it himself in that of Quirini, an act of politeness which we did not expect. I gave him some music to see how he would like it. He said that it pleased him. Ferdinando he admired especially, and recompensed him as he had done the gentlemen of the court, with a glass of wine. We remained four hours at table to please him, and drank à la

A letter from the Electress Sophia, dated Herrenhausen, 11th August, 1697, adds some further details of this curious visit, on which she was accompanied by her three sons, George Louis, Christian, and Ernest Augustus, the fourth, Maximilian William, having left Hanover.* “The Czar is very tall, his features are beautiful, and his figure very noble; he has much vivacity of mind, prompt and just repartee; but with all the advantages which nature has bestowed upon him, it is to be wished that his manners were a little less rough.”†

15th September, she writes—“I might embellish the recital of the journey of the illustrious Czar if I were to tell you that he is alive to the charms of beauty; but, to confess the fact, I perceived no disposition to gallantry in him, and if we had not made such a point of seeing him, I do believe that he would not have troubled his head about us. In his country it is the

Moscovite, that is to say, all at once standing, to the health of the Czar. Frederic was not forgotten: however, he drank but little. To see him dance, I caused M. le Fort to be asked to let us have his musicians, who came after the repast. He would not begin till he saw how we danced; which, to gratify him, as well as to see him dance himself, we did: but he could not, and would not begin till he had some gloves; he caused some to be sought for amidst his whole train without succeeding in finding any. Madame my mother danced with the great Commissary (Golofkin), whilst M. le Fort led off with the daughter of the Countess Platen, and the Chancellor Wotznicin danced with her mother. This went off with great gravity, and the Moscovite dance was pronounced pretty. In fine, all were much pleased with the great Czar, and he appeared to be pleased also. I hope that you may be so too with the account I give you of him. If you find it à propos you can divert Monsieur the Elector with it. Here is enough to tire you, but I could not help it; I like to speak of the Czar, and if I attended to my wishes, I should tell you more, instead of saying, I remain well disposed to serve you,

“SOPHIA CHARLOTTE.

“P.S. The Czar’s fool also made his appearance: he is very stupid, but it made us laugh to see his master take a great broom and begin to sweep him.”

* Maximilian William of Hanover had engaged with Frederic von Moltke in a conspiracy to set aside the right of primogenital succession of his elder brother. Sophia Charlotte is said to have warned her father of this by letter as early as the year 1691. The conspiracy was discovered, and punished in the case of Moltke, by death, after the failure of two attempts to escape in that of the Prince by an imprisonment of several years; on being set at liberty he went to Vienna, and there embraced the Roman Catholic religion in 1701.

† Erman.

custom for all the women to lay on white and red, and paint is one of the essential parts of the wedding presents which they receive. This is the reason that the Countess Platen particularly charmed the Muscovites. But in dancing, they took our whalebone corsets for our bones, and the Czar testified his astonishment by saying that the German ladies “ont les os diablement durs.”* In another letter she mentions the Czar’s four dwarfs. “Two of them were well-proportioned. The Czar sometimes kissed them, and sometimes pinched their ears. He took our little Princess (Sophia Dorothea, then about ten years old, afterwards Queen of Prussia) by the head, and kissed her twice, by which her *fontange* was very much deranged. He also kissed her brother” (afterwards George II., who was then sixteen).

She also relates that “the Czar and Sophia Charlotte exchanged snuff-boxes, and that he made both ladies feel the callosities of his hands, caused by his labours in the dock-yards.”

From this much talked-of visit of the great Czar we must return to the course of events at the Court of Berlin. It is to a conversation of Sophia Charlotte with the clergyman Jablonsky that the origin of one of the finest institutions in Berlin, the Academy of Sciences, may be traced. She lamented that that city should have neither observatory nor calendar of its own. The observation struck Jablonsky, who reported it to Danckelmann, and that minister proposed it as worthy of the Elector’s consideration. Frederic, as usual, mindful of his great French cotemporary, of whom in so many things he offered a humble imitation,† having reflected that science was “the thing” at Paris, conceived that perhaps it ought also to be the thing at Berlin, and from this small commencement we

* Erman.

† Frederic is said to have been so fervent an admirer of Louis XIV. that to introduce any subject to his favourable consideration it was only necessary to say that the French monarch had expressed an interest in something similar.

shall have to notice the gradual rise of that important institution which we have just mentioned.

The death of the Elector Ernest Augustus, which took place in 1698, made a great and melancholy change in the position of the Electress Sophia. Although as a husband he had not always been faithful to her, yet he had unvaryingly treated her with the greatest esteem and confidence, and had allowed her opinion greatly to influence his actions. "She did not rule him, but she ruled with him,"* and her firm, cheerful co-operation lightened to him the cares of the government, in which she participated. Leibnitz speaks with tenderness of the kind-heartedness and integrity of the deceased sovereign, especially of his abhorrence of calumny and of all reports brought to him to the disadvantage of others.†

On the accession of his eldest son Prince George Louis to the electorate, not only was Sophia carefully excluded from all share in the government, but she was even treated with a considerable degree of coldness and mistrust by the new Elector. The loss of her husband, and this conduct on the part of her son, naturally drew yet closer the bonds of affection which had always so strictly united her with her beloved daughter, and we henceforth find the frequency of their reciprocal visits much increased, more especially because the mediation of Sophia was usually needed in the misunderstandings which now frequently took place between the Court of Hanover and that of Berlin; for she possessed and exercised more influence over the mind of Frederic than Sophia Charlotte had ever even sought to acquire.

It was now also that the great question of the possibility of the union of the Protestant churches of Germany came into active discussion between the Courts of Berlin and Hanover; and, with an equal interest in the cause, neither Sophia of Hanover, nor her daughter, were inclined to remain idle spectators of so momentous an affair. The correspondence was

* Guhrauer's *Life of Leibnitz*.

† *Ibid*.

carried on, on the one side by the court preacher, Jablonsky, who commenced it by order of the Electress, March 5, 1698; and on the other by Leibnitz, "the architect and *primum mobile* of the whole work," as Jablonsky entitled him, who was supported by all the influence of Sophia of Hanover.

This most desirable object occupied the minds and employed the pens of most of the thinking men of the day. It called forth from Leibnitz his "Tentamen Irenicum," and from "the German Fenelon," "The Man with the Angel's Soul, the noble and gentle" Spener,* his "Reflexiones."

Jablonsky, when speaking of these two works, said, that he "prayed the gracious providence of God to make use of them to remove from the way those two heaviest stones of stumbling, the disputes upon Predestination and Election, and upon the Holy Sacrament."

In one of Sophia's letters to him, written during the period of the discussion, she says, that as Christianity came into the world by a woman, how glorious a thing would it be for her if this great work should be effected by her means! Effected, however, it was not destined to be; for, after several years of negotiation, the question was allowed to fall to the ground without result.

A great change had taken place in the administration of Berlin towards the close of the last year, owing to the disgrace of Danckelmann. This minister, who had formerly been governor to Frederic in his youth, was one of seven brothers. He had been considered a prodigy of learning in his boyhood, and had disputed publicly at twelve years old; he had after-

* Vehse thus characterizes Spener, and gives the following particulars respecting him. He was the founder of the so-called "Pietists," a sect professing a modified form of Lutheranism; their principal resort was Halle, where the lives of such men as the pious and active Francke, and the enlightened Thomasius, the first vindicator of the rights of the German language, reflected honour upon their profession. Spener lived for fourteen years in Berlin, where he contracted an intimate friendship with Fuchs, Canitz the poet, and others of the best men of the day. He died in 1705, a few days after the decease of Queen Sophia Charlotte.

wards attracted the attention of the great Elector, who appointed him at twenty to the charge of governor to the electoral Prince; he had attached himself deeply to his pupil, and had twice, it is said, saved his life.* On the accession of Frederic, by a rapid promotion, he passed from office to office, till in the year 1695, at the meeting of the seven brothers Danckelmann—the Pleiades, as they were then called—all high in office,† Frederic appointed him his Prime Minister. The brothers were ennobled by the Emperor the same year, and to the arms which they already bore, was added the device of seven sceptres united by a ring.

During the administration of Danckelmann, “the Colbert of Brandenburg,” the revenue had increased by 150,000 Thalers annually, thus proving the wisdom of his administration, in that respect at least. Nevertheless, his prosperity was as short-lived as it was brilliant, and that owing in a great measure to the natural arrogance of his disposition. Not only did he incur the ill-will of the other courtiers by the hauteur of his demeanour towards them, but in his intercourse with the Elector himself, it is said, he could not forget that the latter had once been his pupil, and even sometimes proceeded to tutor him upon his conduct, in a manner which could not fail to be highly displeasing to Frederic. Indeed, once the Prime Minister interfered to prevent an intended journey of the Electress to Frankfort-on-the-Oder, by telling her that the “Treasury coffers were not full.” An anecdote is also on record of his behaviour to the other courtiers. Upon one occasion, coming late into church, when the sermon had already

* Once, at the period of the pretended poisoning in 1680, and again in 1687, when on occasion of an illness of Frederic's, Danckelmann bled him, contrary to the advice of the physicians.

† A coin bearing the device of one large star, and six smaller ones emerging from the clouds over the city of Berlin, with a Latin motto, was struck at this period. Count C. Dohna gives Danckelmann credit for this, and says that he, Count D., pointed it out as if accidentally to the Elector, who was highly indignant at the arrogance of his Prime Minister.

commenced, the Field-Marshal Barfuss and Kolbe Wartenberg (both of whom afterwards succeeded in turn to the Premiership), were speaking together, Danckelmann pushed between them with the words, "Gentlemen, why do you not make room for me?" Kolbe immediately did so, replying, "There is room here." The Prime Minister, however, in acknowledgment, only said to him with cold hauteur, "It is your duty, sir, to make way for me."

Danckelmann was a man of a saturnine and melancholy temperament; a gloomy foreboding of his approaching disgrace constantly hovered before his mind; he was never seen to smile. He gave a magnificent fête as a house-warming of his newly-built palace, and on this occasion, whilst the rest of the company were dancing in the great hall, it chanced that Frederic found himself alone with his Prime Minister, in the latter's private cabinet. Several beautiful pictures hung upon the walls, and the Elector paused to admire them. With an air of yet deeper gloom gathering over his fine, but dark countenance, Danckelmann, as if overshadowed by the spirit of prophecy, pronounced solemnly, "Those pictures, as well as all the rest of my possessions, will soon be in your hands. My enemies will succeed in robbing me of your favour; I shall be disgraced and imprisoned." Frederic, much moved by the mournful solemnity of this prediction, placed his hand upon a Bible which by chance lay upon the table, and gave him a solemn promise that these things should never take place, and that he would listen to no reports inimical to him. Despite the Elector's promise, however, the prophecy was fully accomplished; although, had not Danckelmann strenuously opposed the pet project of the kingdom, it is probable that the ascendancy which his powerful understanding had gained over Frederic's weak mind, would have defeated all the efforts of his enemies, of whom Barfuss, Wartenberg, and Christopher Dohna were the chief. Shortly after the peace of Ryswick the minister gave in his resignation, which was accepted by Frederic in

November, 1697. Danckelmann remained still at Berlin for a short time, preparatory to retiring to his estate. On the evening of the 10th of December, Frederic, with a duplicity of which he was rarely guilty, conversed with him in the most friendly manner, and bid him adieu before his departure, which was to take place the next day. That same night Danckelmann was arrested, his effects sealed, and himself conveyed to the fortress of Spandau. He remained in prison till 1707, when, on the occasion of the birth of Frederic's first grandson, he was released, and allowed to live at Cöthbus, on condition of not leaving the kingdom. He was succeeded in his office by his old enemy Barfuss, who only retained it till 1701, when Count Kolbe Wartenberg became premier.*

The projected Academy, or, as it was at first called, Society of Sciences, was now fast assuming shape and consistency, and the death of the learned Puffendorf, in Sept., 1699, seemed to afford an opening for the accomplishment of Sophia Charlotte's earnest desire to place Leibnitz at the head of the new association. Jablonsky was directed by her to invite him to Berlin, but owing to his occupations at Hanover, he was at that time unable to accept the invitation. In the ensuing year Jablonsky (March 1) received instructions formally to offer the presidency of the Academy to the philosopher. Leibnitz accepted the post, and shortly afterwards came to Berlin. Let me here give a short description of this celebrated man, the chief of Sophia Charlotte's most highly honoured friends. He was born at Leipzig in 1646. His earliest youth was devoted to the study of jurisprudence, but he soon became known for his scientific attainments; he visited England several times, and corresponded with Newton, and others of our learned men. The work on which he expended the greatest labour, and for

* Pöllnitz and Vehse. A powerful faction, headed by Count Dönhoff, (brother of the former Oberstkämmerer, Count Frederic, to whose office Kolbe succeeded,) and the Dohnas, and supported by the Queen, endeavoured, though unsuccessfully, to overthrow the new Minister in 1702. Upon the failure of their attempt Dönhoff and the Dohnas retired from Court.

which he had collected an immense mass of materials, yet which at his death existed only as a sort of sketch of his ultimate intention, was to have been a history of Brunswick, preceded by a geographical account of the territory, with its natural productions, &c. He was a devoted adherent of the house of Hanover, and here he spent most of his time, until his appointment to the Academy of Sciences called him to Berlin, where, until the death of the Queen, his residences were frequent and lengthened; so much so, that it excited in some degree the jealousy of the Elector of Hanover, who, upon one occasion, when a fall in which he hurt his leg had confined Leibnitz to his bed and thus prevented his leaving Berlin, sent him word that "he had need of the services of his head, and not of those of his legs."

After the death of the "Philosophical Queen," the attention which had been called to the prosecution of scientific pursuits was suffered to slacken, and, as a natural consequence, the lustre of the Academy also greatly declined; incompetent professors were suffered to fill the chair, and Leibnitz mourned at once the loss of his patroness and friend, and the decline of the institution which had been so cherished by her. He revisited Berlin for the last time in 1711. The death of his old, firm friend Sophia of Hanover, in 1713, was another shock to his declining health, and he himself died in 1716, having vainly attempted to write down some yet unuttered remnant of his wisdom only a few hours before his death. In person he was tall, and nobly formed; the expression of his features was at once bold, open, and benevolent; * and the veneration and esteem in which he was held by Royalty itself, speak sufficiently as to the character of the man. In his religious views he was perhaps somewhat of a latitudinarian; yet there could be no more doubt of his Christianity than of that of his disciple, Sophia Charlotte, upon whose religious principles the aspersions that have been cast were, beyond question, unjust.

* Gahrauer's Life of Leibnitz, and Varnhagen von Ense's Life of S. C.

Great and learned man as Leibnitz undoubtedly was, he, judging from his writings, does not appear to have been fully master of either of those languages in which he habitually wrote and spoke. His Latin is laboured and inelegant; the German language (of which Frederic the Great says that, even so late as his day, the only liberty which the Germans enjoyed in its use was in permitting themselves to make a most barbarous “estropiage” of it) he totally neglected, although at the same time he regretted the disuse of it, and recommended its cultivation; whilst in his French correspondence, so far from finding either freedom or elegance, we meet with faults which would disgrace the theme of a school-girl of modern days; but of this the reader will have the opportunity of judging, as I shall presently have occasion to insert one of his letters to the Electress of Hanover.

The inauguration of the institution of the Academy of Sciences at Berlin, took place on the Elector’s birthday, July 11, 1700, and in honour of both events Sophia Charlotte gave a magnificent fête at Lützenburg, or “Lustenburg,”* as the Electress of Hanover took pleasure in naming it, in reply to the accounts she received of the gay festivals which took place there. Of this fête Leibnitz sent her a detailed account in a letter, part of which I will transcribe, were it only that the character of the *delassement* in which such minds as those of Leibnitz and Sophia Charlotte (the former perhaps somewhat unwillingly) could participate, must interest, though it may at the same time excite surprise. Nor will that emotion be lessened at finding the “classic pen” directed by that mighty mind, “that planet which was sent down to enlighten the darkness of earth’s gloomy paths of ignorance”—of whom Fontenelle said that, were he decomposed, enough wisdom would be found to form three or four other great philosophers—employed in describing, to use the mildest term, such puerilities. The letter is dated July 13, 1700 :—

* Castle of Pleasure.

“ Madame,—Quoique j’imagine que Madame l’Electrice fera à votre altesse electorale une description de la masquéraade comique, ou dela foire de village, représentée hier au Théâtre de Lützenbourg, j’en veux pourtant aussi dire quelque chose. Le directeur en était Monsieur d’Osten, qui a été dans les bonnes graces du feu Roi de Danemarck. On avait réglé le tout fort à la hâte, pour être executé le jour destiné à célébrer la naissance de l’Electeur, c’est à dire le douzième, quoique l’onzième, qui était le dimanche passé, soit le vrai jour natal. On représenta donc une foire de village, ou de petite ville, où il y avait des boutiques avec leurs enseignes, et l’on y vendait pour rien, des jambons, saucisses, langues de bœuf, des vins et limonades, du thé, café, chocolat, et drogues semblables. C’était Monsieur le Margrave, Christian Louis (brother of the Elector), Monsieur d’Obdam (the Dutch ambassador), Monsieur de Hamel (the general of that name), et autres, qui tenaient ces boutiques; Monsieur d’Osten, faisant le docteur empirique, avait ses arlequins et saltimbanques; parmi lesquels se mêla agréablement Monseigneur le Margrave Albert (also a brother of the Elector). Le docteur avait aussi des sauteurs, qui étaient, si je ne me trompe, Monsieur le Comte de Solms et Monsieur de Wassennaer. Mais rien ne fut plus joli que son joueur de gobelets; c’était Monseigneur le Prince Electoral (Frederic William, then in his twelfth year), qui a appris effectivement à jouer l’hocus pocus.

“ Madame l’Electrice était la doctoresse qui tenait la boutique de l’orviétan. Monsieur Désaleurs (the French Envoy) faisait très bien le personnage de l’arracheur de dents. À l’ouverture du théâtre parut l’entrée solennelle de monsieur le docteur, monté sur une façon d’éléphante, et madame la doctoresse se fit voir aussi portée en chair par ses Turcs.* Le joueur de gobelets, les bouffons, les sauteurs et l’arracheur de dents vinrent après, et quand toute la suite du docteur fut passée, il se fit un petit ballet de Bohémiennes, des dames de la cour, sous un chef

* The Electress had two Turkish pages, Ali and Hassan, amongst her suite, as well as a Turkish female attendant, named Fatima—they were all baptized.

qui était Madame la Princesse de Hohenzollern (a sister of Zinzendorf, the Imperial Prime Minister), et quelques autres s'y mêlèrent pour danser. On vit aussi paraître un astrologue, la lunette ou la télescope à la main. Ce devait être mon personnage. Mais Monsieur le Comte de Wittgenstein m'en releva charitablement. Il fit des prédictions avantageuses à Monsieur l'Electeur, qui regardait dè la plus prochaine loge Madame la Princesse de Hohenzollern, principale Bohémienne, et se prit de dire la bonne aventure à Madame l'Electrice le plus agréablement du monde en vers allemands fort jolis, qui étaient de la façon de Monsieur de Besser (one of the few German poets of the day, and also the master of the ceremonies). Monsieur de Quirini (a Venetian mentioned before as one of the pages) était valet de chambre de madame la doctoresse, et moi, je me plaçai avantageusement pour voir tout de près avec mes petites lunettes, et pour en faire rapport à votre altesse électorale. La demoiselle de Madame la Princesse de Hohenzollern avait mal aux dents ; et l'arracheur, les tenailles de maréchal à la main, faisant son métier, fit paraître une dent de cheval marin. Le docteur, louant les prouesses de son arracheur, laissa juger à l'assemblée combien il fallait être à droit, pour tirer une telle dent sans faire du mal. Parmi les malades qui démandaient des remèdes, étaient Messieurs d'Alefeld et de Fleming envoyés de Danemark et de Pologne, et notre Monsieur d'Iten (the Hanoverian Minister), vêtus en paysans de leurs pays, chacun ayant sa chacune. Madame la Grande Maréchal (the Gräfin Lottum) était la femme de l'arracheur, et l'aidait à mettre en ordre ses drogues et instruments ; il en était de même des autres. Plusieurs entremêlèrent adroitement des vœux pour l'Electeur et l'Electrice ; Monsieur d'Obdam en flammand, Monsieur Flemming en bon pommérien.

“C'était au reste la tour de Babel, car chacun y parlait sa langue ; et Monsieur d'Obdam, pour faire plaisir à madame la doctoresse, chanta le chanson de l'Amour médecin, qui finit par la grande puissance de l'orviétan. Aussi celui qui vantait une telle doctoresse, ne pouvait manquer d'en avoir.

“ Sur la fin vint un trouble fête. Monsieur de Reisewitz, envoyé de Saxe en Pologne, faisant le docteur ordinaire du lieu, ou stadthysikus, qui attaquait l’empirique. C’était un combat en paroles assez plaisantes. L’empirique ayant montré ses papiers, parchemins, privilèges et attestations des empereurs, rois et princes, le stadthysikus s’en moqua, et montra de belles médailles d’or pendues à son col et à celui de madame sa femme, disant que c’était par son habilité qu’il avait acquis de telles pièces, et que cela marquait plus réellement son savoir faire que des papiers ramassés.

“ Enfin Monseigneur l’Electeur descendit lui-même de sa loge, travesti en mâtelot hollandais, et acheta par-ci, par-là les bou-tiques de la foire. Il y avait de la musique dans l’orchestre et tous ceux qui ont été présents, qui n’étaient ou ne devaient être que des gens de la cour, ou de distinction, ont avoué qu’un opéra, qui aurait coûté de milliers d’écus, aurait donné bien moins de plaisir aux acteurs aussi bien qu’aux spectateurs.” *

This fête lasted till late in the night. Leibnitz, in writing to one of his friends, says, after a similar occasion, “ I lead here a life which Madame the Electress calls after me, a ‘liederlich Leben,’ and I find myself very much disordered, and out of my element.” The Duchess of Orleans also, to whom her sister Sophia regularly transmitted Leibnitz’s letters, says, in allusion to the gaieties of the Prussian Court, “da muss es toll hergehn.”

In addition to this minute description of how the great folks were entertained by seeing a walrus’s tusk drawn from the mouth of a beautiful young lady, and how the crown Prince “learned effectively to play the hocus-pocus,” were I to give the description furnished by the court poet and Master of the Ceremonies, Besser, of the daily course of the festivities attendant upon the marriage of the king’s daughter by his first wife (the Princess of Hesse Cassel), beginning upon the 28th

* This letter is a transcript from the copy which Vehse gives in his “Preussischen Hof.”

of May (of the same year) and continuing till June 10th, it would give a better idea of the half-barbarous state of society as it then existed; but it would occupy too much space, and not afford sufficient interest to justify its insertion. I content myself, therefore, with a summary.

The Princess Louisa was married to her cousin, the hereditary prince of Hesse Cassel. She was arrayed upon this occasion in a dress of silver stuff, which weighed a centner.* The train of this ponderous robe was of golden point d’Espagne. It was seven ells in length, and was in such perfect keeping with the rest of the dress that, on account of its great weight, besides the six bridesmaids who carried it, two “special bride pages” were required to help to sustain the burthen. In this truly rich attire, the bride, with her six bridesmaids and two pages attached, danced the torch dance. She was at length carried off, perfectly exhausted with the fatigue of supporting the “allzugrosse Schwere” of her dress, to her apartment, where she went through the further performance of seizing blindfold three persons out of the circle which danced round her, and placing her crown upon their heads, thus predicting that they would be the next to follow her example in adopting the state of matrimony. Finally, after the ceremonies of the toilette, she had to present one of her garters to her father, and the other to her father-in-law, each of the gentlemen gallantly winding it round the handle of his sword. The next ten days were, with the exception of the intervening Sunday, a succession of balls, operas, illuminations, processions, &c., &c. It is evident that a royal bride in those days required considerable physical strength to go through all the ceremonials attendant upon her marriage.

But weightier affairs were now to call for Sophia Charlotte’s attention. Frederic had found numberless obstacles opposed to his claims upon the regal dignity, both by the Court of Austria and those of the other European Powers. Negotia-

* One hundred weight.

tion languished and dragged on in interminable tedium, when a new expedient was suggested which he was anxious to adopt,—to try what might be accomplished by the powers of fascination of his wife and mother-in-law, two of the most charming women in Europe.

No difficulty in the execution of this plan was anticipated from Sophia of Hanover, who exulted in politics and negotiation, and wished, above all things, to see her daughter a queen, but from Sophia Charlotte, who disliked everything connected with both. The proposition, however, was made to her that she, with her mother, under pretext that her health required the waters of Aix-la-Chapelle, should visit William of Orange at the Hague, and the Duke of Bavaria at Brussels, and try their powers of persuasion in furtherance of the cause. After some consideration the Electress replied, that on condition not only of payment of her expenses, but of a considerable augmentation to her income, which she found inadequate to her outlay, she would undertake the commission. Pöllnitz describes with humour the comical negotiation which took place between her and Wartenberg, who undertook to increase her income provided that she would admit his wife to her assemblies. I must here explain the position which Madame Wartenberg held, in order to show why such a stipulation should have been necessary. Graf Kolbe was a nobleman of the Palatinate, who had made his first visit to Berlin in the train of Mary of Orange, sister of the great Elector's first wife, Louisa. He returned thither, and accepted office in 1690, and became Chamberlain after Count Frederic Dönhoff's death. He had been protected and assisted in attaining this office by Danckelmann, to whose pride, reserve, and melancholy his gay disposition and easy manners offered a contrast which proved but too agreeable to the Elector; and very unscrupulously did the gay and polished courtier use the stately Prime Minister as a ladder to prosperity, and with equally little remorse did he, that elevation gained, help to kick down the means which had

enabled him to mount. His wife was the fair daughter of a wine-merchant of the Rhine. Her beauty had attracted the attention of Biedekap, one of the royal valets-de-chambre, who had espoused and brought her to Berlin. Here Kolbe saw her, and she became his mistress. Her children by Biedekap were afterwards ennobled by the mediation of Frederic, with the title of Baron and Baroness of Aspach. After Biedekap's death Kolbe married her, and introduced her to the Elector, who, it is said, in his imitation of even the vices of his magnificent model at Versailles, thought it incumbent on him to have, at least, a nominal mistress, and accordingly promoted the beautiful Madame Kolbe Wartenberg to that post; but the lady was ambitious, and though no doubt she had elevated herself considerably in her own estimation, still something was lacking to her complement of satisfaction—the Electress would not hear of receiving her, or even of knowing that there was a Madame Kolbe Wartenberg in existence, and consequently, the court ladies turned up their noses at her, or ignored her existence likewise. But now presented itself a literally golden opportunity, which must not be allowed to slip. The usually unapproachable Electress wanted money. One day Count Christopher Dohna presented himself before the Electress, and introduced his errand thus:—"I am commissioned with the most absurd business in the world; will your Highness allow me to disburden myself of it? La Kolbe languishes to be allowed to appear in your presence. She wishes it so vehemently, that perhaps she will die of grief if you do not accord her this permission. Think what a loss! Would you, on account of a little ceremony, rob the Court of its fairest ornament?"*

"That is indeed being a skilful messenger," said Sophia Charlotte, laughing; "but I am not surprised—you come fresh gilded from your embassy to England. You have a taste for negotiation, I see, and are destined to become famous in

* "Mém." Count C. Dohna.

it. But, seriously, what do you advise me?"—"Nothing; Heaven preserve me from advising your Highness in such a case. I have discharged my commission; that is enough for me."—"You jest, but the affair is more disagreeable to me than you imagine: an answer is necessary, and it embarrasses me. Now—well, if her husband can so manage that the Elector commands it, I will consent to receive her." The Elector, however, did not give the command, and Madame Wartenberg had not as yet the honour of a reception by the Electress. The journey to Aix la Chapelle was, nevertheless, resolved upon, and actually undertaken in May, 1700. Leibnitz, who was taking the baths of Töplitz, was honoured by an invitation to accompany the two ladies, but was unable to accept it.

At Brussels the two Electresses were most courteously received by the Duke of Bavaria; not so, however, by his beautiful Polish termagant of a wife,* who, during her sojourn in Berlin in 1695, on her road to join her husband, had signalized herself by the most monstrous infractions of court etiquette. She was excessively jealous of Sophia Charlotte's far-famed beauty, and she now refused to appear with her in public. Sophia Charlotte treated this discourtesy lightly, and amused herself by various pleasantries upon it with the Duke, to whom upon one occasion she laughingly said, "Without flattering myself, I really think that I should have suited you better for a wife than the Duchess. You love pleasure; I by no means hate it; you are gallant; I am not jealous; you would never see me out of temper; and I think we should have made a very happy marriage of it."

The two ladies were exposed to a frightful storm on their subsequent journey between Antwerp and Rotterdam, which, however, only alarmed them. They here made acquaintance with two of the learned men of the age, Bayle and Basnage. The former was ill in bed, when a notification of the honour to which he

* Thérèse Cunegonde, daughter of John Sobiesky.

was invited reached him, and he excused his non-appearance on the ground of his indisposition; however, the skilful ambassador Dohna was sent to negotiate, and in the end the philosopher made himself visible. He appears to have been greatly struck by the mental endowments and amiable manners of the illustrious travellers, who, he said, "pleased less by their rank than by their learning and enlightenment."

The issue of the interviews both with the Elector of Bavaria and the King of England was entirely successful. Both promised their support to Frederic's cause, and Sophia of Hanover likewise obtained from William the promise that her family should be called to the succession of the English throne."*

The final consent of Austria also was obtained at length by a curious, though fortunate, mistake.† Count Dohna, who was Prussian ambassador at Vienna, despairing of the success of his mission, had applied for and received a recall. Immediately after his departure a despatch arrived, directing that the sum which Count Kinsky had rejected should be offered to another minister; the Prussian resident, Bartholdi, took the name of this minister, which was written in cipher, for that of Father Wolff, a Jesuit, the Emperor's confessor, and applied himself to him. Wolff, who was high in the Emperor's favour, felt himself flattered that so powerful a Prince should have sought his assistance, and used all his influence in Frederic's behalf; and the result was, that the Emperor conceded the royalty of Prussia. Other authors give a slightly different account of this affair; the result, however, is certain.

And now Frederic turned all his thoughts to the preparations for his coronation, which was to take place as soon as possible; and here was a grand field for the exercise of his ever-growing passion for silk and velvet, gold, silver and precious stones, glittering processions and rare shows; and here was torture in prospect for the show-despising Electress, who, in an unwonted fit of ill-humour, gave vent to her contempt for

* Pöllnitz.

† Ibid.

the part of "Reine de théâtre," that she was about to play in Berlin with her "Prussian Æsop."

Madame de Wartenberg caused a terrible "Remora," says Count C. Dohna, in the arrangements for the ceremony of the coronation, by urgently insisting that the right of bearing the train of the Queen pertained to her. No expostulation of her husband availed to dissuade her; in vain did he suggest that the ceremony was long—that she would be too much fatigued; she was not to be put off. In his perplexity and distress, knowing how unpalatable this would be to Frederic, and that Sophia Charlotte would never consent, he applied to Count C. Dohna, and conjured him to try his powers of persuasion upon the lady. "Frankly," says the latter, "I pitied poor Colb, although I could not help laughing, that a man who governed his master could not govern his own wife;" knowing then that "poor Colb" feared her "like fire," Dohna undertook the difficult commission, and, after incurring a storm of abuse from the fair lady, who finally burst into tears of rage and disappointment, he gained a victory which once more did infinite credit to his skill as an ambassador.

Frederic selected Königsberg as the scene of his coronation, both because it was his birth-place, and because the name was one of good omen.* And thither on the 17th December, 1700, with a train of 300 carriages and 3000 horses, journeyed the Elector and Electress of Brandenburg, thence to return as King and Queen of Prussia. The coronation took place January 15th, 1701, and on that day, in the great hall of the Castle, at eight o'clock in the morning, appeared Frederic, arrayed in a scarlet coat every one of whose buttons was worth 3000 ducats, with

* A Königsberg poet, named Bödecker, on the occasion of Frederic's birth, during her residence at that place, presented Louisa of Orange with the following prophetic verses :—

"Nascitur in Regis Fredericus Monte.

Quid Istud ?

Prædicunt Musæ ; Rex Fredericus erit."

Wegführer's "Life of Louisa of Orange."

a purple velvet mantle, covered over and over and stiff with gold embroidered crowns and eagles, and clasped by an agraffe of three diamonds worth a ton of gold, with a gold sceptre in his hand, surmounted by the great ruby that the Czar Peter had presented to him; and already he felt himself a king in every inch of his small stature as he placed on his own head the crown which Kolbe presented to him on bended knees. That ceremony concluded, he adjourned with all his train, and big with all his new majesty, to the chamber of Sophia Charlotte, and now "*la victime*" was indeed to be "*immolée.*"* She was attired in gold brocade, with a stomacher of diamonds, and a spray of magnificent pearls on her bosom, and she, too, wore a velvet mantle covered with gold embroidery, and a gold crown on her grand black hair, and she looked, indeed, every inch a Queen, so that the poet Besser says "she seemed to adorn her jewels, and the courtiers felt they must not congratulate the Queen on receiving the crown, but the crown for receiving such a Queen." She knelt to receive it from the hands of her husband, but as the ceremony was long and tedious, she, it is said, absently refreshed herself with a pinch of snuff, which so shocked the King that he remonstrated with her with great solemnity on her want of a due sense of her position. Then followed a long ceremony in the church, and after that a banquet. The next day the new King instituted the order of the Prussian Black Eagle, and all the rest of the month was devoted to feastings and rejoicings, whilst the Queen was sighing for the quiet of Lützelburg, and writing to Leibnitz that the festivities of the Court only made her still more regret the philosophical conversations which they had so often held together.

In the train of Macclesfield, who was this year the bearer of the call of the house of Hanover to the ultimate succession of the English throne, was the well-known Toland, an Irishman, who had made himself infamous for his bold and blasphemous writings against religion. Sophia Charlotte had heard much

* Letter to La Pöllnitz, "*Qu'en penses tu? La victime sera-t-elle immolée?*"

of this man, and she now became desirous of seeing him, and hearing from his own lips the extraordinary assertions which were said to have proceeded from him. We accordingly find him shortly afterwards at Berlin, where he held a long discussion in the presence of the Queen, and openly disputed the authority of the New Testament, with Beausobre, one of the clergymen of the French colony. Toland afterwards published an account of this journey, in which he thus describes the Prussian Queen:—"She is the most beautiful princess of her time, and not inferior to any man in depth of understanding." "I never in my whole life heard any one who unveiled the insufficiency or sophistry of an adversary's argument more skilfully, or discovered the strength or weakness of a position more quickly than she." He also published in 1704 his "Letters to Serena," which he pretended had been addressed to her, but which it is at least certain that she had never seen.

In the beginning of the year 1702 Sophia Charlotte paid a visit to Hanover. The Margrave Albert (the King's half brother), despite the inclemency of the season, persisted in acting as coachman on the journey thither, clad in a velvet coat and silk stockings. On this occasion those famous carnival festivities took place, the report of which so excited the King's anger that he did not entirely forget or forgive the Queen's participation in them for more than a year. For a description of these certainly somewhat extraordinary diversions we are also indebted to the pen of the great philosopher Leibnitz; it was a "classic masquerade," representing a feast; the description of which is given by Petronius. The modern "Trimalcionus" was the Raugraf Charles Maurice, the illegitimate son of the Elector Palatine, Charles Louis. The Duchess of Orleans says of the Raugraf that "he would have been a perfect philosopher had he not been such a lover of wine, but he was blind drunk every day at Berlin." Yet merry and talented, witty and wild, with all his faults he was a great favourite with the Queen. His part suited well with his character, as the *trophées d'armes* of

Trimalcionus were empty bottles. The Queen, the Elector George of Hanover, and their youngest brother, all took part in the masque. One of the standing jests of the day was, that the carver was hight *Coupé*, in order that Trimalcion might call and command him at the same time, in imitation of the "Carpus" of Petronius. From one pie, when it was opened, escaped live birds, which were retaken by sportsmen: there was also a Zodiac, with dishes answering to the twelve signs. "But in the midst of the merry-making the Goddess of Discord threw one of her apples; a quarrel arose between Trimalcion and his wife Fortunata (Mdlle. Pöllnitz); he threw a glass of wine over her, and they could only be reconciled with difficulty." However, everything terminated in the "most agreeable manner in the world." These extracts will no doubt suffice as a specimen of the "Lustbarkeiten" of the times, in which a degree of licence, together with coarseness and frivolity, prevailed, which astonishes the more refined taste of modern days, and to which the high-minded Queen does not seem to have been altogether superior, although her Court is said to have smiled like "a fair green island" out of the sea of that "disgusting roughness and frivolity," "the reproach of which," says Niebuhr, "amidst all the other German Courts, strikes that of Frederic I. in full measure."

We must now return to the Prince Royal, whose conduct about this time cost his mother some of the bitterest moments she had ever experienced. He was now fourteen years of age, and the turbulence of his childhood had developed with his growth, and strengthened with his strength. He was rough and rude, and showed no taste for any of those things which his mother most prized; books he hated, and none but martial music pleased his ear; whilst instead of attending to his dancing-master's lessons of elegance, he preferred being present at the drill, or lying in the sun with his face greased, to give it a brown and martial appearance. To indulge his military taste he had been allowed to form two companies of cadets of noble

houses, of his own age, one of which he commanded, and his cousin, the Prince of Courland, the other. In order to show that she sympathized with his pursuits, the Queen used sometimes to be present at the exercises of these little troops, on which Frederic William spent all his pocket-money, and all the time which he was allowed from his studies, and enforced attention to those accomplishments which he abhorred even more than his studies.

One day his mother came unexpectedly upon him, when, in a fit of passion, he was dragging his playmate, the Prince of Courland,* by the hair. The Queen was so horrified at the excess of rage which her son displayed, that she could scarcely collect herself to reprimand him coldly for his conduct. His exploit of kicking young Brandt, one of the pages, down stairs, completed her dismay. She became absolutely ill with the anxiety which the affair cost her. A letter of hers to Mademoiselle Pöllnitz, of this time, speaks of the "chagrin" which she is suffering. "This young man, whom I believed to be only lively and impetuous, has given proofs of a hardness which surely derives its origin from a bad heart. 'No,' says La Bülow, 'it was only from avarice.' Heavens! so much the worse—avaricious at so tender an age! One corrects oneself of other vices, but that increases; and then of how great importance is it by the results which it induces. Can compassion and pity find access to a heart governed by interest? Dohna is an upright man, he has both probity and nobility of sentiment, but his failing is also a spirit of economy, and we correct but indifferently a fault of which we inwardly approve.

* Son of the widowed Elizabeth Sophia of Brandenburg, sister of Frederic I. She had brought him to Berlin for his education. Frederic William used always to recall his mother's conduct upon this occasion with severe reprehension, because when she came upon him with the young Duke of Courland under him on the ground, and both his hands twisted in his cousin's hair, instead of chastising him, or going to the aid of the vanquished, she only exclaimed sorrowfully, "My dear son! what are you doing?"—Morgenstern, Mitglied des Tabaks Collegii. See his "Friedrich Wilhelm I."

I have lectured him (the Prince) soundly, and as that does not often happen, I spoke very strongly, and recalled all the instances of his bad conduct upon several other occasions ; added to this, the complaints which the ladies had made of his saying rude things to them, caused my anger to reach an excess. Is this the tone of fine minds ? Is there any greatness in offending ? What coarseness of mind to insult a sex formed, at least, to be the object of politeness from man ! The Abbé came in whilst I was preaching. ‘How august is this,’ said he, ‘I seem to see Agrippina speaking to Nero.’ Indignant at the comparison, and shuddering at the augury, I received him very badly, and he left the room in dismay.”

Amongst the papers of the Princess Amelia, Frederic William’s daughter, was found a document in his handwriting, containing a confession of all his faults, and a solemn promise to his parents of amendment, especially in the errors of want of politeness, and too great familiarity with inferiors.

The Queen now commenced a correspondence with M. Schmettan, the Prussian Ambassador at the Hague, in which she expresses her wish that the affairs of the succession of Orange, which by the death of King William III. was claimed by Frederic, might require the presence of the Prince Royal, and thus, by calling him away from the associations of his boyhood, and subjecting his mind to the polish of foreign intercourse, rub off the excrescences of that character, the strength and originality of which threatened to degenerate into eccentricity and brutality.

The failure of this project, which, had it been then carried out, might probably have effected all that the Queen desired, is shown by another letter, written by her later in the same month. Despairing of being able to send her son away from home, and resolved to “take advantage of what was unavoidable,”—as a last resource, she again writes to Mademoiselle Pöllnitz, to tell Dohna not to oppose any disposition to gallantry that he might evince, only to endeavour to guide it to some

object calculated to improve and soften his disposition, and polish his manners; but his roughness in female society, was indeed only caused by his shyness towards the other sex, which, throughout his whole life, he treated with respect, although his opinion of women was not particularly exalted. Unfortunately, too, his youthful passion for the Margravine Caroline of Anspach, who was five years older than himself, and who always treated him as a mere boy, and the mockery with which this attachment was assailed at Hanover, helped to aggravate his natural shyness. With respect to this early love affair, Morgenstern says, "His passion did not cease, although the object of it, by her mother's and grandmother's directions, treated him harshly." "There seems scarcely a doubt that if the Margravine Caroline of Anspach, instead of scornfully rejecting the youthful lover, had endeavoured gently to convince him of the impossibility of a union, and if the electoral Prince George Augustus had remonstrated with him kindly, instead of with mockery and scorn, the crown Prince would have resigned himself, and there would not have existed such an obstinate attachment, nor such a long-continued resentment in a forgiving heart like that of Frederic William. The electoral Princess Sophia also was far too fond of a joke, or of anything laughable, to make a serious representation to her grandson, and the measure of her courtesy had more of salt and pepper than of honey in it." And when at length the Prince of Prussia did leave his father's Court for foreign travel, his character was already too much formed to admit of great benefit being derived from new associations.

One of the often-recurring misunderstandings between the Courts of Berlin and Hanover now demanded the presence of the Electress Sophia, in her usual office of mediatrix; and, as usual, she successfully employed her softening influence on the mind of Frederic, the managing of whose weaknesses cost fewer scruples to her than to her daughter. The power of Warten-

berg had now become very great,* and a feeling by no means friendly was entertained by him, or rather by his wife, towards the Queen, for though she had at length consented to receive the Countess, Sophia Charlotte could not prevail upon herself to abstain from addressing her in French, a language of which the low-bred lady was wholly ignorant, and being therefore unable to reply, the witticisms of the Court had been levelled against her on more than one occasion. Finding this to be the case, Sophia here also interposed her good offices, and even invited the Countess to Hanover, the effect of which emollient was quickly shown by the increased complaisance both of the Countess and her husband.

We have at various times spoken of the Queen's love for music; her well-known delight in this art led many of the best masters of the time to resort to her Court. It was for her that Ariosti composed that opera,† the wonderful overture to which, with its wild bewildering melodies and strange outbursts of harsh discord, now entranced, now almost stunned the ear of the perplexed listener. Corelli was her favourite composer. Buononcini also spent here much of his time; hither came the young Handel, the disciple of Ariosti, at the age of fifteen, and astonished the Queen by his extraordinary talent; here also rang the sweet voices of Paolina, Fridolin, and Regina Schonaes, whilst most of the other stars of the musical world of that day shone from time to time upon the firmament of a Court where they were sure of a just appreciation of their talents.

On the marriage of the King's brother, the Margrave Albert to Princess Maria, the daughter of the widowed Duchess of

* To such a pitch had the arrogance of Count Kolbe Wartenberg arisen, relates Count C. Dohna, that upon one occasion, when the latter's brother, Count Alexander, entertained the King at dinner, that meal was delayed, and the King kept waiting for some time, because the Prime Minister had not yet arrived, and it was not thought politic to sit down to table without him.

† For description of this opera, see Varnhagen von Ense "Leben der Königen, S. C." It was performed on the occasion of the marriage of the Margrave Philip William of Schwedt, in 1699.

Courland, the direction of the festivities attendant upon which the King left wholly to the Queen, as he did not entirely approve the match,* Buononcini's opera of Polifemo was brought out, the Queen herself performed in it, seated at a piano in the midst of the orchestra, and accompanied by some of the best masters of the day.

It was in 1703 also that those famous discussions took place between the Vota Père, confessor of John Sobieski, and the Protestant divines of Berlin, on the authority of the writings of the Fathers, in which, despite the presence of the Queen, of whom L'Enfant, a clergyman of the French colony, quoted "*Olli subrisit vultu quo cuncta serenat*" Vota lost his temper, and afterwards wrote that letter of apology, which drew from the Queen a very long and very learned reply. But as the subject would not interest the generality of my readers, and as the learning is supposed to have been supplied by those divines who had taken part in the controversy, I will not insert it.†

The end of the year 1704 was marked by the appearance of the Duke of Marlborough as English Ambassador,‡ at the Court of Berlin, where he was honoured with the favour, and assisted in his mission by the influence of the Queen. The

* When the Duchess of Courland married the sexagenarian Margrave Christian Ernest of Baireuth, her step-daughter, the Princess Maria of Courland, remained with the Queen; the Margrave Albert fell so much in love with her, that, it is said, on the King refusing his consent to the marriage, he threw himself at his feet, and entreated Frederic either to kill him, or to grant permission for the union. The King was so touched that he yielded the desired permission, but would not be present at the marriage.

The Margrave Albert was very hasty, but his anger was merely a "*feu de paille*," and evaporated almost before it had time for expression. He flew into a rage with his wife twenty times a day, and begged her pardon the moment afterwards, for he was passionately attached to her.—*Pöllnitz*.

† For the letter and controversy, see Erman's "*Life of Soph. Ch.*" Appendix.

‡ Frederic renewed his alliance with the maritime powers on finding that Charles XII. disregarded his remonstrances upon the election of Stanislaus Leckinski to the crown of Poland. Marlborough came to arrange the articles of the treaty with England, as Frederic's part of which 8000 Prussians were sent off for operations in Italy.

August following his departure, the Prince Royal also left Berlin with the intention of visiting England by way of Holland. This first parting from her darling son, whom, despite his faults and his utter dissimilarity of character, Sophia Charlotte idolized completely, cost her much grief; and a sad presentiment that this might be, as indeed it proved, the last time that she should behold him, seems to have overshadowed her mind. On her escritoire was afterwards found a heart drawn by her hand, with the inscription "*il est parti.*" Towards the end of the year, Sophia of Hanover, fearful that the Countess of Wartenberg might throw obstacles in the way of her daughter's usual presence at the carnival festivities at Hanover (for Sophia Charlotte had not long been able to maintain her intercourse with that lady on the same amicable footing as that on which her mother had placed it), began to lay her plans for once more mollifying the resentment of that powerful personage. She proposed to invite her, if the thing could not be accomplished otherwise, to accompany the Queen, who wrote to Leibnitz, that she would submit even to this annoyance rather than not pay the wonted visit. After much, and somewhat difficult negotiation, this arrangement was finally made, and Sophia Charlotte joyfully commenced her preparations for the journey. January 12th she wrote to her son, who was then in Holland, saying that she had time for but a few words as she was much occupied with her intended journey to Hanover, and that thence she hoped, if the King again went to Holland, to be able to accompany him, and to have once more the pleasure of embracing her child. This letter also joyously announced the news from Vienna, that the General Heisler had gained a complete victory over the enemy.

Unwilling herself to throw any difficulty in the way of her visit to her mother, whose disappointment she knew would be extreme if she did not go, Sophia Charlotte concealed the fact that she had been slightly indisposed for some days previous to

her intended departure; but upon the road she was so unwell as to be obliged to stop at Magdeburg. On the 16th, feeling herself better, she continued her route, and arrived at Hanover on the 18th. There her indisposition again returned with greater force, but finding that her mother was herself obliged to keep her room on account of some slight illness, she persisted in appearing at a ball in the evening, in order not to disappoint the assembled guests. The consequences of this kind, but imprudent step, were soon apparent in a violent and frightful accession of illness; she was bled the next night, but without materially alleviating the symptoms. On the 20th she was much worse, and on the 23rd the fever increased rapidly. It was the opinion of Hertz and other physicians,* that the nature of her illness, which proved to be abscess of the throat, was not understood by her medical attendants. However that might be, it soon became apparent to Sophia Charlotte, as well as to those around her, that her hours of life were numbered, and she at once prepared to meet death with the resignation of a Christian, and the fortitude of a philosopher. She wrote to Frederic, thanking him for the many marks of love and kindness which he had constantly bestowed upon her, and recommending her servants to his care. Afterwards calmly, and even cheerfully, she awaited the summons which was to call her, still in the prime of her life and the bloom of her beauty, from so much that made life still attractive. The only thing on which she expressed much anxiety was, the shock which her loss would prove to her mother.

To Mademoiselle Pöllnitz, whom she saw weeping bitterly, she said, "Do not pity me, I am about to satisfy my curiosity upon the causes of things which Leibnitz could never explain to me, and I shall provide the King the spectacle of a funeral procession, which will give him occasion to display all imaginable magnificence."†

* Biester Monatschrift.

† "Mém. pour servir à l'Hist. de Brand." Fred. Great.

M. de la Bergerie,* the pastor of the French congregation at Hanover, was summoned, in the absence of the German chaplain, to the Queen's bedside, at one o'clock in the night of the last day of January. She received him with a smile, saying, "Ah! M. la Bergerie, one recognises one's friends in times of need. You come to offer me your services at a time in which I can do nothing for you in return, I thank you for it." He knelt by her bedside, and pronounced a somewhat long exhortation, which he has recorded, and in which he dwelt so much on the temptations to the love of worldly pomps, which especially beset sovereigns, that Sophia Charlotte, whose besetting sins these certainly had not been, glanced with a smile at *Mademoiselle Pölnitz*. As she was then exhausted, *La Bergerie* left her for the time; he would have returned shortly afterwards, but was told by her brother the Elector, who was then with her, that she said she had for twenty years made a serious study of religion, that no doubts rested upon her mind, and that he could tell her nothing which was not well known to her. She had a long private interview with her eldest brother, and also with the Prince Ernest Augustus. She then remained praying in silence for a long time. She afterwards kindly bade adieu to all her attendants, calling out to her two Turkish servants who stood at the door, "Adieu, Ali; adieu, Hassan." *La Bergerie* once more came and knelt in prayer by her bedside, when suddenly taking her brother's hand, she exclaimed, "Dear brother, I am suffocated." They were her last words. The abscess in her throat had burst, instant death ensued, and Sophia Charlotte's fair and gentle spirit had indeed soared into that mysterious region whose boundless treasury of knowledge it had, whilst on earth, so longingly striven to penetrate.

Thus, February 1st, 1705, in the thirty-seventh year of her age, died Sophia Charlotte, the first Queen of Prussia; † and if

* See *Erman*.

† It is curious that all the most remarkable events of her life took place upon a Sunday. She was born, christened and married on Sunday, and on that day also she died.

in the intellectual "curiosity" and the "philosophic" resignation which are described as marking the closing scene of her life, we find but little of the humble faith of the dying Christian, it must be remembered not only that these expressions are recorded as issuing from her lips by the pen of a man who himself had professedly no religious creed,* but, also, that in common with most of the German princesses of that day, she was not allowed to adopt any decided views upon the subject of religion until her marriage.

This vile system had, with Sophia Charlotte, gone nigh to produce the result which seems almost inevitable on a mind endowed with so large a development of the reasoning powers as hers—that of making her an atheist. She had set herself, by the light of her own reason only, as it were, to inquire whether religion was necessary; and Divine Providence had mercifully guided her to a conclusion which was scarcely to be expected from such a process, for she became convinced both of the truth of revelation and of man's need of a Saviour, and declared herself unhesitatingly to be a Christian. Nevertheless, a large intermixture both of rationalism and philosophy unquestionably always obscured the purity of her faith, and may, probably, even on her deathbed, have dictated expressions still savouring strongly of the pride of reason, such as those which have been quoted.

I need here make but few remarks upon her character, which my readers may have gathered from her actions. Although the judgment of an almost contemporary writer, who says she had "all the virtues, and none of the faults of her sex," may appear too partial, yet that which he proceeds to state of her was indisputably true—that nothing either in her conduct, or in any of the relations of her life, ever gave rise to the least suspicion against the integrity of her morals. She was at least a virtuous, if we cannot add, a tender wife; yet who could wonder that such a woman should fail to attach herself

* Frederic the Great.

to a man who, by his own grandson's description, was "great in little things, and little in great ones?"* Erman concludes that a little philosophical indolence in the depths of her nature may have accounted for her dislike to mix herself in the politics of the time, and this indeed seems more than probable. At all events, she did more towards the polishing of manners, and the forwarding of education and science at Berlin, than any woman has done before or since; and sadly indeed did the Court degenerate after her purifying influence no longer shone upon it. Still also does the Prussian revere with filial affection the memory of that first beautiful "mother of the land," whose mantle none was found worthy to inherit, until the fair and unfortunate Louisa of Mecklenburgh Strelitz rivalled her predecessor, at once, in beauty and in the devotion with which her people regarded her.

The dismay and desolation which at Hanover took the place of the carnival festivities may be more easily imagined than described. When the news reached King Frederic, he fainted, and remained so long without consciousness that his medical man thought it necessary to bleed him. Upon his recovery he shut himself in his room, and refused to see any one for several days; but the cares of the funeral procession, as Sophia Charlotte had rightly predicted, served in a measure to divert his grief.

The remains lay in state in the old castle chapel at Hanover for some time, and were then, with much funeral pomp, conveyed to Berlin. At every town where the procession stopped; the same honours were paid to the Queen's lifeless remains which had greeted her while living; and the mournful parade of the entry into Berlin fully justified a remark which fell from her lips a short time before her death—"Hélas! Que de cérémonies inutiles on va faire pour ce miserable corps."

Sophia of Hanover was inconsolable for the death of that child whose affection had been her main support for so many

* Frederic the Great, "Mém. pour servir."

years. La Pöllnitz, the favourite maid of honour, unable to endure Berlin without the presence of her mistress and friend, retired to Hanover, where she remained in Sophia's service. She returned once afterwards to Berlin, as we have already stated, in 1722.

To Leibnitz, who had been unable to attend the Queen upon her journey to Hanover, her death proved a heavy misfortune. Various allusions to the loss he had experienced may be found in his letters, not only of that date but at a much later period ; but as space is precious, I forbear to insert them, thus terminating the memoir of the first Queen of Prussia.

LIFE OF
SOPHIA LOUISA,

OF MECKLENBURG SCHWERIN,
SECOND QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.

OF the three years which intervened between the events last recorded and Frederic's third marriage, a short review is here necessary.

The pretensions of the Countess of Wartenberg, which had been kept under at least some degree of restraint by the late Queen's dignity and superiority of mind, assumed after her death so insolent a character, that, to use Pöllnitz's expression, "the Court became a perfect desert." The attractions, too, of its now single ornament, the Margravine Albert,* the twin star whose shining had of late seemed to add new lustre to Sophia Charlotte's beauty and intelligence, were so often withdrawn by her husband's sudden freaks of jealousy, that she could scarcely be said to belong to the Court; and although the King held assemblies three times a week, the Princesses of the blood and the other ladies of the Court, not choosing to be flouted by the assumptions of the arrogant and light-famed plebeian, Madame de Wartenberg, gradually ceased to frequent them.

The death of the King's only daughter,† who now expired

* The Princess Maria of Courland, of whose marriage mention has been already made.

† She had in 1700 been married to her cousin, the hereditary Prince of Hesse Cassel, as before mentioned. Her mother, it will be remembered, the Elector's first wife, was Elizabeth of Hesse Cassel.

after a long and mysterious illness, added to the grief which the death of the Queen had caused him, so affected his health, and preyed upon his spirits, that his counsellors, to distract his attention from his sorrows, urged him to take into consideration the propriety of the marriage of the crown Prince, who, upon hearing the fatal tidings of his mother's decease, had immediately returned to Berlin.

Several Princesses, a match with either of whom might prove advantageous for the interests of Prussia, were accordingly proposed for Frederic's approval; but the inclination of the crown Prince deciding for the Princess Sophia Dorothea of Hanover, his marriage with her was arranged, and took place the following year, 1706.

Meantime the war of the Spanish succession was raging in Europe. It was in this year that the Prussian forces, under the Prince of Anhalt Dessau, so much distinguished themselves in the decisive action before Turin, that the Duke of Savoy wrote to the King of Prussia, "The enemy's army has been completely defeated in its own lines before my town of Turin; the troops of your Majesty have had the greatest share in this battle. I cannot enough praise their bravery, nor the extraordinary valour of M. the Prince of Anhalt."

Louis XIV., weary at length of a war which drained France of men and money, and dispirited by the terrible defeats which his armies had sustained, not only at Turin, but at Blenheim, Ramillies, and Oudenarde, was inclined to pacific measures; but the allies, triumphing in repeated victories, would not consent, on such terms as France could accept, to a peace which, after some years more of destructive warfare, they were content to sign, on far less advantageous terms, at Utrecht.

Warlike operations accordingly recommenced, and the crown Prince, leaving his bride, went to join the army under Marlborough, in Flanders. He remained in the field during the campaign, and was subsequently present at the battle of Malplaquet.

This was the period,* too, in which the arms of Sweden, having triumphed over the coalition which had threatened the dominions of her young monarch upon his accession, were still supreme in the dominions of the dethroned King of Poland, for the dreadful day of Poltawa had not as yet checked the victorious career of Charles XII.

A curious anecdote is related of the wife of the Swedish Minister, Count Piper, which so well illustrates the terror with which the rapid conquests of the King of Sweden had inspired the neighbouring Powers, that I insert it.

The Countess Piper passed through Berlin on her road to join her husband, and as the wife of the powerful minister of Frederic's powerful ally, she was received with much distinction, and lodged in the hotel destined for the accommodation of ambassadors and foreign princes. Unfortunately, she was put into a suite of rooms, newly decorated with tapestry, the design of which represented the victories of the great Elector, during his campaign against the Swedes. The Countess imagined that this had been done purposely to insult her and her country, and declared that she would not remain in a house where such an indignity had been offered her. However, orders were speedily given that the tapestries should be changed and every apology offered; and the lady suffered her patriotic jealousy to be for the moment appeased, on the King himself apologizing to her for the unintentional offence she had received. A few days afterwards, passing over the Pont Neuf, where Schlüter's magnificent statue of the great Elector was then in process of erection, she fancied that the fettered slaves, grouped at the base, were intended for Swedes, and insisted on their being taken down. Had she been Countess anything else, this extravagant demand might have only raised a laugh at her expense; but she was the Countess Piper, and in all haste Frederic ordered her wishes to be instantly complied with. This was the easier of execution, since this portion of the monument was as yet only executed in plaister.

One of the most singular occurrences of this period, when the darkness of ignorance was still struggling with the advancing rays of science, and when men had still not given up the idea of the philosopher's stone, was the appearance of the "Gold-maker," Count Caetano de Ruggiero, a Neapolitan, at the Prussian Court. He had come to Berlin in 1705, with various high-sounding titles, from the foreign States, where he had been a sojourner, attached to his name. He travelled in a splendid four-horsed equipage, with a large train of servants, in liveries of scarlet and gold. He and his wife lived in a magnificent house, and were served in magnificent style.

Knowing that the King delighted in displaying his generosity to strangers and foreigners, Ruggiero begged leave to place himself under his protection, from the persecution of foreign Powers.

The neighbouring Court of Dresden was just then all in commotion at the marvellous gold-making achievements of a certain Baron Böttiger with his mysterious powder. Frederic had repeatedly, but vainly, claimed this man, who was a Magdeburger, as his subject. When, therefore, the Count Ruggiero requested to be allowed to exhibit proofs of his powers of changing other less valuable metal into gold, the proposition was eagerly accepted, and a day was appointed for the experiment, which was to take place in one of the apartments of the Palace.

At the appointed time, the crown Prince, who was naturally somewhat suspicious, having, as he had stipulated, furnished the requisite utensils, the powers of the Gold-maker were put to the proof. The experiment took place in the presence of the King, the High Chamberlain Wartenberg, the Grand Marshal Wittgenstein, and the crown Prince, who himself stirred the contents of the crucible; and Count Ruggiero succeeded, by means of a certain marvellous tincture, of a reddish colour, mixed into the compound by the Prince himself, in changing "a pound of quicksilver into a pound of pure gold." In vain

did the acutest of the Berlin goldsmiths try and test it, it was gold, the purest, finest gold.

The King was delighted beyond measure at the success of the experiment, and flattered himself that he should soon be richer than the great Mogul. The wonderful stranger then presented him with a small quantity of this magical red tincture, and also of a white one, and promised within sixty days to prepare so much of the same compounds as should produce six million Thalers' worth of gold and silver.

The Count Ruggiero, as one whom the King delighted to honour, was forthwith installed into the palace of the late minister Danckelmann, and fed from the kingly table. Of course, it was unnecessary, if not insulting, to offer money to a man who had it in his power to produce more than the mines of Peru. The King sent him, as a testimony of his regard, twelve flasks of old French wine!

As the stipulated sixty days drew near their close, the splendid Italian began to show symptoms of restlessness; he made long excursions, first to Hildesheim, then to Stettin. The King, a little uneasy at these absences, sent him gracious letters in his own handwriting, his portrait set in brilliants, and an officer's commission. The adept had been rather dismayed at receiving nothing more substantial than French wine; a little encouraged at this, therefore, he returned to Berlin, and began to make conditions; at first he demanded 50,000 Thalers as his terms, and from this, gradually abated his demand to the sum of 1000 ducats to take him back to Italy.

The suspicions awakened by this strange conduct were confirmed by letters from Vienna and other Courts, upon the pockets of whose rulers he had made similar experiments, by converting quicksilver into gold for their use, while he converted their credulity into ducats for his own.

The King demanded the fulfilment of the Gold-maker's promise; Ruggiero fled to Hamburg, whence he was brought back and imprisoned. After being found guilty as an impostor, he

finished his career in 1708, by being hung, arrayed in tinsel robes, upon a gilded gibbet.

The birth of an heir to the throne in 1707 caused great, though short-lived, rejoicings.* In honour of the event, and at the intercession of the crown Princess, Frederic liberated his old minister, Danckelmann. This freedom was coupled with the restriction of residing within fourteen miles of Berlin.

The crown Prince had a deservedly high opinion of the character and talents of this minister, and on his accession he offered to restore him to office; but advancing age, and long years of imprisonment, had curbed the ambition of the statesman, and taught the fallen minister full many a bitter lesson of the instability of power, and the gray-headed and time-bowed old man declined again to climb the giddy elevation whereon, even in the pride of his manhood and the full activity of his mental powers, he had been unable to maintain his position.

The King's health being still in a declining state, he was induced to go to take the baths of Carlsbad, in Bohemia, whilst the crown Prince was recalled from Flanders to act as Regent during his absence. This journey of Frederic's was taken advantage of by the ministers, Wittgenstein, Ilgen, and Biberstein,† to put a plan of their own in execution.

Jealous of the influence which Frederic William began to assume in the government, and uneasy at the decided ill-will which he manifested towards themselves, they had formed a scheme of inducing the King to marry again, hoping that by thus raising to the throne a Princess who would owe her elevation to them, they should secure to themselves an auxiliary able

* The child did not long survive its birth.

† Wittgenstein held the post of obermarschall, or as it was then called *Maréchal de la Cour*. Ilgen was of the *Bürger* class; he was Minister of Foreign Affairs; he was engaged in the crown Prince's service also. Biberstein was appointed to the *Oberherold-meistership*; he was also employed in several foreign missions as ambassador, in which capacity he visited England in 1712.—See Vehse.

and willing to assist them by her influence, and thus to counterbalance the growing power of the crown Prince.

The King, passing on his journey within a short distance of the abode of his half-sister, the Duchess of Saxe Zeitz, turned aside thither to visit her. The ministers improved this opportunity to win over the Duchess to support their views, and propose the matter for the King's consideration. Furnished by them with a basis of operations, Madame de Zeitz commenced her attack. She introduced the topic, as if accidentally, during a conversation with her brother, dwelling upon the misfortune which the failure of a succession would be to Prussia, should the opinion of the crown Princess's medical attendants (an opinion probably provided for the occasion) prove correct, that she could never again give birth to a child. She then inquired why he did not marry again. The King replied, though not as if displeased with the idea, that at his advanced age he should find no Princess willing to accept him, did he make such an attempt. To this objection Madame de Zeitz replied that, on the contrary, she could at once name several Princesses who would be greatly flattered by such a proposal. The King finally promised to reflect upon the suggestion, and the conversation terminated.

He mentioned the Duchess's proposition to Wittgenstein and Biberstein, who, as if the idea had been suggested to them for the first time, received it with affected surprise and most unaffected delight. They went into raptures at its wisdom, assuring the King that it really appeared like a divine inspiration on the part of Madame de Zeitz, so exactly had she suited her advice to the emergency; whilst Biberstein, with tears in his eyes, conjured Frederic to listen to the prayer of the people addressed to him by the voice of his sister. The King, nearly convinced, next applied to Wartenberg, who, fearing to lose ground with the crown Prince, declined to advise. Count Christopher Dohna, too, was perplexed by a similar question as to what he thought of the matter; but although, from courtesy and policy combined, he would advance no opinion, he was

nevertheless, too much attached to his old master not to let his judgment upon the point be divined.* Frederic's other counsellors, however, did not suffer the matter to drop. Several other ladies were suggested for his consideration, amongst others, the Princess of Hesse Homberg, Charlotte Dorothea, of Brandenburg, Culmbach, and the Princess of Nassau Dietz, sister of the Prince of Orange, Statthalter of Friesland. The King inclined towards this lady, under the idea that the differences with regard to the Orange succession to which, on the death of William III. of England, he laid claim in right of his mother, Louisa of Orange, might thus be settled. Baron Chalsac† was therefore sent to the Prince to make the proposal. It was accepted, and all was arranged, saving Frederic's demand, that in imitation of the widowed Duchess of John Frederic of Hanover, who had carried her daughter's train upon the celebration of her marriage with Joseph, King of the Romans, afterwards emperor,—the mother of the Princess of Nassau Dietz should, in like manner, bear her daughter's train upon the occasion of her marriage with himself.

With this stipulation, however, that lady refused to comply, and on the matter being pressed, she said that sooner than consent to such a humiliation she would renounce the marriage for her daughter altogether. Frederic took offence at this, and the negotiations were broken off. But the Duchess, his sister, was indefatigable in the cause; she next suggested the Princess Sophia Louisa of Mecklenburg Schwerin, the sister of the reigning Duke. This match she further recommended, as strengthening Frederic's claim to the Mecklenburg succession.‡

The King was by no means averse to the idea of a match in this quarter; negotiations were, therefore, once more set on foot, and an interview was arranged between him and the Princess Sophia Louisa. This meeting took place at Rosenthal, near Oranienburg, whither she came accompanied by her mother.

* Dohna's Memoirs.

† Chalsac belonged to the French colony.

‡ A claim upon the eventual succession of Mecklenburg had been asserted by the Kurbrandenburg family since the year 1442.

The Princess was then only twenty-three years of age whilst Frederic was fifty-one, but this disparity of years does not seem to have shocked either party.

The King was much pleased with the Princess during the half hour's conversation which he had with her at Rosenthal. Proposals were now formally made to the Duke of Mecklenburg for his sister's hand, and as formally accepted; all preliminaries were settled without delay and the day for the ceremony fixed. The marriage took place at Mecklenburg, Wittgenstein acting as the King's representative on the occasion.

The next day the Princess set out for Berlin. She was accompanied by her mother, her brother, and others of her relatives, as far as the frontiers of the Prussian dominions. She was received in great state at some distance from Berlin, by Frederic, who had made splendid preparations to greet her arrival. He then left her in order to return to the capital himself to arrange for her state entry, which took place on the 27th. The bride and bridegroom repaired to the church on the 28th, to receive the nuptial benediction. Frederic's taste for magnificence had exhausted itself in the decorations which had been lavished upon this festive occasion. The streets were hung with tapestry, a boarded way covered with crimson carpeting, and shaded by a magnificent awning, was prepared for the passage of the bridal party. The King, dressed in gold brocade garnished with diamonds, led the procession, and was followed by the Queen with her royal crown upon her head. She was supported by her step-son the crown Prince, and the Margrave Albert Philip, her brother-in-law; whilst her train was borne by six young ladies, all dressed alike in silver brocade; the four Princesses, also dressed alike, carried the royal mantle. There were strewers of flowers, and players of music, and plenty of spectators; nevertheless, says an eye-witness, an air of gloom hung over the whole proceeding. Even the pleasure of the King himself had been damped by an announcement recently made to him by the crown Prince, that his wife, the Princess Sophia

Dorothea, was in circumstances which gave reason to hope for the birth of an heir ; and, bridegroom as he was, Frederic had confessed, that had he been aware of the fact sooner he would have contracted no new marriage ties himself.

The charge of forming the new Queen's household was committed to Wittgenstein, the Grand Marshal of the Court. He selected as Oberhofmeisterin, his mother-in-law the Countess of Wittgenstein Valendar. According to Pöllnitz's description, this lady does not appear to have been very well qualified for her office. "She had never left the depths of Wetteravia," says he, "save to go to the fair of Frankfort, where she had contracted all the pride of the Countesses of the empire, and though she had the best will in the world to act her part, she was far better fitted to figure at Wetzlar (at the Reichshammergerichte), than at Court."

Count Wittgenstein's sister-in-law was the chief of the maids of honour, who were all ladies of the highest families in the kingdom ; although, according to the same author, they were no better calculated to grace a Court than the Oberhofmeisterin, for they were all young without the least "*teinture du monde*," vain and haughty, with manners like those of Byron's "budding Miss"—

"All giggle, blush, half pertness and half pout."

Amongst the regulations made by Wittgenstein for the new household was one to the effect that no gentleman below the rank of a count should dine at the table of the maids of honour, a measure which was subject of much dissatisfaction to those young ladies, who would have been "very glad to marry gentlemen" without that title.

It would have been indispensable for the young Queen to possess considerable knowledge of the world and *à plomb* herself, to neutralize the effect of so much *gaucherie* in the manners of the Court circle of which she was to be the centre. Count Schwerin, too, her oberhofmeister, although an accomplished courtier and an amiable man, was not one who was qualified to

give advice to a young Princess, inexperienced in the ways of a Court, at the same time that she was called upon to enact so important a part in it ; consequently, we need not be astonished if we find that she neither fell into her place with ease, nor occupied it with dignity.

In addition to the above-mentioned drawbacks, also, she had been allowed the utmost liberty as regarded her conduct at her brother's Court. She had been thoughtless and gay, and if not absolutely indiscreet, at least somewhat heedless as to the spotlessness of her reputation. She knew that the tongue of scandal had been busy with her name ; she knew, moreover, that certain rumours had reached even the ears of the King. Under these circumstances, she took the very wisest resolution that any similarly-situated Princess could have taken—that of bringing discredit upon all such reports by the blameless regularity and rectitude of her life and conduct ; and had she been more happily situated with regard to her female retinue—had she been fortunate enough to possess even one judicious friend, either male or female, upon whose counsel she could have relied—had she herself been endowed with sufficient strength of mind to carry out her plan independent of extraneous influence—her elevation to the throne might have been fraught with far happier consequences to herself than those which will have to be here recorded ; for the King was much taken with her, and was considerably in love during the early days of their marriage.

Unfortunately, however, her chief companion and confidential friend was Mdle. Grävenitz, who had been her *dame de compagnie* at the Court of Mecklenburg, and who, if report told truth, had been more than a little coquettish and indiscreet in the days of her youth. But having now reached the years “when reason begins to triumph over the passions, she had taken shelter from scandal under the cloak of religion,” and practised new austerities to make up for old frailties. This lady, taking advantage of the Queen's facility of disposition, set before her her own gloomy severity and cheerless asceticism as the model by which she

should regulate her own future manner of life, thus imposing an unnatural degree of restraint upon the original gaiety and animation of her manners, and freezing the open frankness of her disposition into a chilling reserve—a great misfortune with a man like Frederic, for whom vivacity possessed much attraction, more especially as he had been very unwilling in the first instance to permit the transportation of the soured spinsterhood of Mdle. Gravenitz from the Court of Mecklenburg to that of Berlin.

As the Queen was a Lutheran, moreover, she had chosen the preacher Porst, of the Nicolaikirche, as her spiritual adviser, and he had made her acquainted with Francke, the Pietist and founder of the Orphan House at Halle.

There can be no doubt of the real piety and active and extensive usefulness of Francke, who laboured in the cause of education and enlightenment with zeal worthy of a noble workman in a noble cause; yet the influence which he exercised over the mind of the Queen appears to have been by no means happily directed; and although no doubt he secured her co-operation in his benevolent schemes, still he does not seem to have taught her either to find an active and healthful occupation in the fulfilment of those duties to which she was unquestionably called by her high station, or to seek a natural outlet for her pent-up warmth of feeling in the direction of sympathy for others, and in the exercise of those personal charities for which her position afforded an ample field.

It is painful to find such an aspersion cast by historians upon the memory of so good a man, yet it seems clear that he rather fostered than checked the tendency which the Queen's mind began to assume towards that morbid activity of conscience which, in temperaments constituted like hers, is but too often a prelude to mental disease. But Francke was misunderstood and misrepresented in the times in which he lived, and it may be that this charge, which has survived to our day, is but a superannuated remnant of the malice and folly which then, as well

as now, delighted in bespattering the reputation of a good man. At all events, the accusation is made by a man who changed his own profession, we cannot say religion, three times.*

Meantime the crown Princess, despite the predictions of her husband's enemies, had, in the year 1709, given birth to a child;† and though it was not the anxiously-desired male heir to the kingdom, the event sufficed, nevertheless, to cast a more cheerful aspect over the face of Prussian affairs, then overclouded by the fearful pestilence which had swept away 200,000 souls in its ravages, and the fatality of which was said to have been chiefly owing to the negligence of those officers (especially Wittgenstein) to whose charge the wants of the nation had been committed.

A strange and indecorous scene took place at the christening of this child. In the new court regulations which had been made on the recent marriage of the King, Madame de Wartenberg had obtained the right to take precedence of all unmarried Princesses, and even of all married ones whose husbands were not reigning Princes. The Duchess of Holstein Beek had actually sold her right of precedence to her for 10,000 Thalers (which the King paid). With the glow of conscious dignity, therefore, and with stately step that told of right to take precedence even of Princesses of the blood, Madame de Wartenberg walked in her proudly-conspicuous place in the procession

* Pöllnitz was a man of great wit and talent, but of a worthless character. Frederic II. spoke of him, before his accession, as "an infamous fellow, diverting at table, to be imprisoned afterwards."—(Seckendorf's "*Journal Secret*.") He ruined himself completely by his prodigality; he then turned Roman Catholic, in order to marry a rich widow, but the marriage did not take place. It is said Frederic told him that had he been a Protestant he could have given him a vacant office: Pöllnitz soon after informed the King that he was reconverted; but Frederic replied, "I am very grieved, I have just given away the office, but if you would become a Jew, I could find you a post!" Pöllnitz's "*Mémoires pour Servir à l'Hist. des Quatre derniers Souverains de Brandebourg*" are full of life, anecdote and scandal; I see but little reason for the accusations of inaccuracy which several authors bring against them, at least compared with the writings of others, against whom no such charge has been laid.

† Frederica Wilhelmina, Marchioness of Baireuth.

to the chapel, when suddenly from behind a door where she had lain *perdue*, Madame de Lintelo, the wife of the Dutch ambassador, darted forth, and endeavoured to take the place in front of her. Madame de Wartenberg was not the woman to submit to such an infraction of her rights; Madame de Lintelo held her vantage-ground; a tremendous fracas ensued. The two fair ones betook themselves to the weapons with which Nature had furnished them, and attacked each other in that most easily assailable part, the head-dress. Lace and feathers flew in all directions, and a cloud of powder nearly hid the combatants from view. In vain did the master of the ceremonies, Besser, endeavour to separate them, at untold risk of personal damage in the indiscriminating fury of the affray; but Madame de Wartenberg had the advantage in point of muscular strength, and a few hearty cuffs finished the discomfiture of Madame de Lintelo, whilst the victor bore off as a trophy a lappet from the head-dress of her vanquished foe. Her victory was rendered yet more complete, when, on afterwards complaining bitterly to the King of this attempted infraction of her just claims, he yielded to her representations, and demanded an apology from M. de Lintelo; and on his non-compliance with the demand, threatened to withdraw his troops from Flanders unless the States insisted that their ambassador should compel his wife to make the requisite apology.

But Madame de Wartenberg's days of triumph were drawing to a close. In 1710, at the period of the Jahr Markt at Leipsic, which then drew a great concourse of the most distinguished families of the kingdom, and not unfrequently royalty itself to that town, Frederic had gone thither for the purpose of an interview with the King of Poland, who was his debtor to a very considerable amount, and upon whom he wished to press a speedy settlement of accounts. During his absence the Queen, although confined to her apartments by indisposition, was, with her ladies, busily engaged upon a piece of embroidery which she destined for a present to the King upon his return.

With the ostensible view of doing Madame de Wartenberg honour, and perhaps with a little private malice in the background, as she knew that the Countess was not fond of such employment, she invited her to assist at these labours of the needle. On the afternoon of the second day spent at the task, a strange attendant was observed to enter the room, and present coffee to Madame de Wartenberg. The Queen inquired with astonishment into the cause of such a proceeding. "Oh!" replied Madame de Wartenberg, carelessly, "it is only my valet." Justly indignant at her effrontery, the Queen commanded her to leave the room. "I think I see myself doing so," replied the Countess, with a loud laugh. Incensed beyond bounds by the insolence of this answer, and the manner in which it was delivered, the Queen called to her attendants to throw the offender out of the window, but no one was at hand to obey the command; and Madame de Wartenberg, thinking discretion the better part of valour, beat a somewhat hasty retreat.

On the King's return the Queen lodged a complaint against the arrogant favourite. The King was very angry, and remonstrated with Madame de Wartenberg, insisting upon her making an ample apology to the Queen, which, being somewhat alarmed at his unwonted firmness, she consented to do, though she artfully contrived at first to delay, and afterwards wholly to evade, this humiliation. This event, however, somewhat shook her in the King's favour, and her intimacy with the English ambassador, Lord Raby, probably did not tend to re-establish her influence.

This nobleman had gained an extraordinary ascendancy at the Prussian Court, and his arrogance seems to have been little short of that of Madame de Wartenberg herself. Pöllnitz relates, that on one occasion, at a much earlier period, he even declined to remain standing whilst the Princess Caroline of Anspach was seated at the King's table, little dreaming that she was one day to be Queen of England. He is said also to

have imprudently boasted that Marlborough held the whole Prussian ministry in leading strings by means of English pay. By means of his influence over Madame de Wartenberg he had certainly succeeded in acquainting himself with many of the most private affairs of the Prussian Court.

But that which more immediately tended to the disgrace of Madame de Wartenberg and her husband, was perhaps the annoyance which her ridiculous claims continually drew upon Frederic by involving him in difficulties with the ministers of foreign Powers.

During the visit of the beautiful Russian ambassadress, Madame de Matuoff,* to Berlin in 1710, she stayed at the house of Monsieur de Lith, the Russian minister, intending to remain incognita; but the King sent to invite her to Court. M. de Lith thought himself bound to return this fête by a banquet, to which most of the foreign ministers, and of course M. and Madame de Wartenberg were invited: he was so anxious that the latter, especially, should honour the festival with her presence, that he begged the King to use his authority to induce her to do so. Frederic accordingly desired that Madame de Wartenberg would comply with M. de Lith's wishes. On the day in question she was even seen to array herself in her most splendid apparel, her windows being opposite to those of M. de Lith's hotel. The banquet awaited but her presence, when a messenger arrived from Madame de Wartenberg to inquire into the order of the arrangements, as she expected to take precedence of Madame de Matuoff. M. de Lith replied that the arrangements had already been made, and that it was not in his power to alter them, the precedence being due to Madame de Matuoff as an ambassadress of the first rank. After this message had been despatched, the space of a few minutes brought another courier from the proud Madame de Wartenberg, charged to state that a violent headache would prevent her having the honour of being present at the dinner. The guests

* Dohna's Memoirs.

were therefore obliged to place themselves at table without the haughty dame, whose character and pretensions, we may be sure, underwent tolerably severe treatment at their hands ; in short, a league offensive and defensive was formed against her by all the foreign ministers except Raby, not only to oblige her to apologize, but to do it publicly. A complaint was therefore formally laid before the King, accompanied by a demand for redress of this injury. Irritated at the frequent recurrence of such offences, and fearful of being involved in a dispute with the Czar, now become formidable by the results of the preceding year's victory at Poltawa, Frederic insisted that Madame de Wartenberg should make a public apology to Madame de Matuoff. Prayers and entreaties were of no avail on this occasion ; the King was firm, and even the passionate tears of the former favourite sufficed only to repeal the publicity of the atonement ; but here also her enemies were more than a match for her, and though the King conceded that she should be allowed to read from a paper the words of the dictated apology, standing, before Madame de Matuoff, who was to remain seated on the sofa, and though that detested paper was torn into a thousand fragments by her passionate hand the moment after it was read, yet the foreign ministers, concealed in the neighbouring apartment, had not only heard every word, but transferred it faithfully to paper, and Madame de Wartenberg soon had the mortification of seeing its publication in a gazette, which her implacable foes took care should reach her without loss of time.

Nor was this the only or even the worst result of the affair. The King meeting her shortly after in the Queen's circle, absolutely threatened that, if she persisted in entangling him in such disagreeable affairs, "he would find means to put a stop to it." All unused to such language from the generally but too indulgent monarch, she was seriously alarmed, and, says Pöllnitz, gave her husband the only good advice he ever received, and the only advice which he did not take from her—to leave the Court.

The crown Prince had long been weary of the Wartenberg sway at Court; his favourite Grumbkow was equally so; Ilgen, the minister for foreign affairs, who had hitherto been Wartenberg's right hand, loved neither the favourite Madame de Wartenberg, nor the "favourite's favourite" Lord Raby; he therefore formed one of the party who had leagued themselves to effect the downfall of the minister, and of his even more obnoxious wife.

The opportunity of the affair with Madame de Matuoff was therefore eagerly seized upon by the confederates, as a fitting preparation for the accusations which they hastened to pour into the King's already-irritated mind. Madame de Wartenberg was charged with being in English pay; with intriguing with Raby; with investing vast sums of ill-gotten money in English securities; various other accusations of a like nature were brought forward, all calculated to estrange Frederic from his former favourite.

Grumbkow and Ilgen also made use of the two Kameckes, in order the better to carry out their scheme. These two gentlemen were both favourites with the King: the "great Kamecke," Paul Anton, had formerly been one of the royal pages; he had attracted the King's notice by his pleasant physiognomy and lively manners; he was a man of no talent, but of an unassuming and honourable character; he had been promoted to the post of Grand Master of the Wardrobe. His cousin, the "little Kamecke," Ernst Bogislav, was cleverer, and not so honest; his road to favour had been found partly by adopting the reformed in exchange for the Lutheran principles, partly by allowing the King to win at chess, whilst seeming to contest the game.

The fall of Wittgenstein was the prelude to that of his chief. A fire which had taken place at the town of Crossen gave an opening for an accusation against him, which was quickly taken advantage of. Wittgenstein had the administration of the funds of the Fire Insurance at Berlin; the inha-

bitants of Crossen applied to the office for indemnification for their losses; not only, however, were there no funds forthcoming to meet their demands, but they were dismissed with insolence by the officials.

Upon this a formal charge of embezzlement of public money was brought against Wittgenstein by the great Kamecke; and as but little defence could be brought, the Order of the Black Eagle was demanded from him in token of his disgrace, and he was shortly afterwards arrested, at his friend Wartenberg's house, and consigned to Spandau, amidst the execrations of the populace.

Two days afterwards, 2nd January, 1711, Ilgen was commissioned to notify to the Prime Minister the King's pleasure that he should retire to Woltersdorf (his only Prussian estate, about two miles from Berlin). This command he immediately obeyed, but sent to beg permission to take leave of the King before finally quitting his service and his dominions. Frederic saw fit to grant the request, and the interview accordingly took place.

Well knowing his master's real kindness of heart, and personal attachment to himself, the former favourite took advantage of both. Throwing himself at the King's feet, he embraced his knees, kissed and wept over his hand, and conjured him to let him die in his service; to allow him to restore all his possessions, since from his Majesty they had been received, but not to deprive him of the consolation of remaining about his person. The King, moved even to tears, raised and embraced him, assuring him that nothing but the good of the kingdom would have induced him to have dismissed so long tried a servant. He then drew a costly ring from his finger, and presented it to him, bidding him keep it as a sign of his undiminished friendship.

Wartenberg then prepared to set out in company with his wife for Frankfort on the Main. Before his departure he wrote to the King, begging him to accept the before-mentioned estate of Woltersdorf, and the garden and palace which Frederic had

presented to Madame de Wartenberg, after Queen Sophia Charlotte's death.

The Count's gift was accepted, but care was taken by Frederic that the donor should be re-imbursed to the full extent of its value. By the advice of the little Kamecke also, a pension of 24,000 Thalers was settled upon Wartenberg, in order not to force him into a foreign service.

On quitting Berlin, Count Kolbe Wartenberg is said to have carried away with him valuables to the amount of several millions; the Countess's jewels alone were valued at 500,000 Thalers. She was in great fear that she might be deprived of these valuables upon the road, but they met with no molestation on the journey, with the exception of a demand for the key of the Grand Chamberlain's Office, and the patent of Grand Master of the Posts, which reached the Count at Eisenach, and to which he replied by despatching the insignia in question with the message that he would send his head, did the King require it of him.

Frederic felt the loss of his favourite terribly, and would have gladly recalled him, could he have done it with consistency. He did in fact cause one overture to that effect to be made to him, but as the invitation was restricted by the clause that Madame de Wartenberg should be left behind, it is recorded, much to her husband's honour, that he declined to accept it on such terms, replying that he could not abandon a wife who was dear to him, and who had not forsaken him in his adversity.

Count Kolbe Wartenberg died soon after his disgrace, in 1712. Frederic was greatly afflicted at the intelligence; he remained for several days in retirement, and when, at his wish, the body was brought to Berlin for interment, the sight of the funeral procession, as it passed the palace windows, so affected him, that he burst into tears.

After her husband's death, Madame de Wartenberg resided principally in Paris, where she is reported to have led a very profligate life. She died in 1734.

The Count Dönhoff and the two Dohnas, who had retired

from Court after the ineffectual attempt which had been made to overthrow Wartenberg in 1702, now returned. Count Christopher Dohna, whose memoirs I have had frequent occasion to cite in the preceding pages, had always been a great favourite with the King,* on account of his vivacity and the finished elegance of his manners; and also because, although he was a polished courtier, his integrity and his high principles of honour had never been called in question; his return was therefore welcomed by Frederic.

Meanwhile, during the occurrences of the foregoing ministerial changes, the position of the Queen had also materially and deplorably altered. The King had continued unremitting in his attentions to her, despite the ill-advised change which was discernible in her demeanour, and in the regulations of her Court, which now, says Pöllnitz, differed little from those of a convent; an unvarying routine of prayers and sermons filled up the day, and entirely usurped the attention and time, part of which, at least, ought to have been devoted to the duties rendered imperative by her high station as the first lady in the land, who should have served as a model of domestic virtues to the other matrons of the realm.

Still Frederic expressed no actual disapprobation of a course which she evidently pursued from conscientious motives, until one day, about a year after their marriage, in the heat of a discussion upon the dogmas of her party, she unguardedly expressed her conviction that none of the upholders of the

* The King used generally in his moments of familiarity to call Count Christopher "Peter," in reference to an anecdote related by Dohna, of his own anxiety respecting a favourite dog, which had made him for once even forget his usual courtly grace, and leave the audience chamber of a foreign prince precipitately, at recognising the voice of his friend Peter in distress. Count Dohna was treated with great favour by King William III. during his mission to England. He gives some interesting details of Lord Portland's views of Prussian affairs.

He was more of a soldier than of a statesman, and had frequently won great applause for his conduct, especially during the siege of Bonn in 1694, and the subsequent warlike operations. He returned to Court in the interval between 1702 and the Wartenbergs' fall, but did not remain there.

Reformed doctrines could hope for salvation. The King, wounded by the hasty remark, rejoined, "Then after my death you could not speak of me as the 'late King of blessed memory?'" Startled at this unexpected application of the opinion which had escaped her, the Queen hesitated, and then replied, "I would say, 'the dear departed King.'" It was an unfortunate equivocation. From that moment the King's affection for her suffered a visible diminution. Mademoiselle Grävenitz was hastily dismissed from her post, Francke was ordered to return to Halle, and Porst admonished no further to occupy the Queen's attention with polemics.

Left now much to herself, the Queen's spirits sunk beneath the loneliness and want of sympathy of her lofty but friendless position, and her mind, weakened by the habit of constant brooding over one subject, became the prey of a settled melancholy. The King, whose visits had gradually become less frequent, now seldom saw her, and had no idea of the state of her health. The affairs connected with Wartenberg's disgrace, too, had for the time completely engaged his attention, and that minister's death had so depressed him, and taken such hold upon his mind, that to dissipate his grief his ministers had urged upon him a visit to Holland, with the view of terminating the difficulties relative to the Orange succession.

In the ensuing year the fresh negotiations for peace between Louis XIV. and the allies; the death of the Emperor Joseph, and the consequences resulting from it; the distress experienced by Frederic on the suddenly-communicated intelligence of the accident which had carried off his rival, the Prince of Nassau Orange; together with his own failing health, so completely occupied his mind, that the unfortunate Sophia Louisa, confined to the retirement of her own apartments, seemed to have been almost forgotten by him. Her attendants, too, were careful to conceal from him the fact that the morbid tendency of her mind had now assumed the character of disease—that there were moments in which the usually gentle Queen was

wrought up to a fearful pitch of excitement—in short, that the subtle boundary which separates the realm of reason from the border territory of insanity was, in her case, overstepped, and that she was no longer mistress of her own actions.

The birth of Frederic the Great in 1712 brightened the latter days of Frederic, although for a time it seemed probable that the delicate, though “engel-schönes” child would, like its little brothers, not long survive its entrance into this troublesome world.

Meanwhile, as has been stated before, the King’s health had long been declining, although it had never been anything but feeble even in his best days. His long-standing asthma had now become exceedingly distressing; he was confined to his apartment, and the flame of life already waned and flickered in its socket, when an incident of a most distressing nature occurred to hasten its extinction. In one of those fits of violence which had now become periodical, the unhappy Queen, escaping the vigilance of her attendants, clad only in her white night-clothes, with her long hair streaming about her shoulders, rushed through the gallery which connected her apartments with those of the King. Unheeding, in her excitement, the glass-door which closed the communication, she burst through this brittle barrier, flung herself, without a moment’s warning, upon the King, who was sleeping in his chair, and overwhelmed him with reproaches. Startled thus suddenly from his slumber, and seeing before him a white figure, with dishevelled hair, covered with blood from the wounds inflicted by the broken glass, and giving way to the wildest gestures and most frantic exclamations, he imagined for the moment that he beheld the hereditary spectre of his house come to forewarn him of his approaching dissolution.

The hasty approach of his attendants, alarmed by the noise, soon dispelled the illusion; but the shock which he had undergone brought on an attack of fever attended by delirium, during which he constantly exclaimed that he had seen the White Lady, and that his end was near at hand.

His illness proved, indeed, to be his last. During the six weeks which it lasted he quitted his bed but once, on occasion of a temporary rally, and was placed near the window overlooking the Castle gardens. News of this improvement having rapidly spread amongst the promenaders, a crowd of eager citizens speedily collected, all anxious to catch a glimpse of their beloved monarch. He caused himself to be placed full in their view, and answered, with a gush of tears, the acclamations which rent the air, as the action was recognised and acknowledged. This was the last parting between Frederic and his people.

Having given his final directions to his son, he assembled his family, and ordered his grandchildren to be brought, that he might give them his blessing. He then took leave of every one, and turning to his son, said, I leave you an earthly crown, whilst I go to receive a heavenly one, which the blood of Jesus has bought for me and for all the faithful."

A quiet and easy death shortly afterwards relieved the feeble old man from the burden of government, now far too ponderous for his failing strength, and freed his frail body from the painful lingering hold of life.

Frederic the Great speaks harshly of the failings of his grandfather, and it must be allowed that there is much truth in the accusations which he brings against him. It is true that his mind was like a "mirror, which reflected all sorts of objects." It is true that "he gathered the flowers and neglected the fruits," and alas! it is but too true that he carelessly "sacrificed the blood of his subjects in imperial wars" in which he had no cause to lift the sword, and that he suffered human lives to pay the cost of trifling and frivolous acquisitions.* Yet despite these heavy charges, there is much to be said in his favour. Prussia owes to him not only the title which ranks her as a kingdom among the nations, but several of her best

* Frederic was on the point of withdrawing 15,000 men from Flanders when, on receiving a jewel from the Orange succession, he suffered his troops to remain. — "Mém. pour Servir," &c. Fred. the Great.

institutions and of her noblest buildings also. He was an honourable and faithful ally, even when his interest clearly pointed to a new order of political connections. He was an indulgent and affectionate master, and none had cause to complain of injustice at his hands. Very great and noble actions, or very wise measures, could not, with justice, be expected from a man to whom Providence had accorded but a limited share of mental strength and capacity; and after all, the Great Judge demands not from him to whom He has given but the one talent the same interest as from him to whom He has intrusted the ten. So the first Frederic "slept with his fathers," and in his stead reigned Frederic William his son.

All unconscious of the disasters of which she had been the pitiable cause, the unfortunate Queen was conveyed, helpless, mindless, and melancholy, but once more gentle and calm, to the residence of her widowed mother at Grabow, in the province of Mecklenburg; and here she passed the rest of her darkened life, a mournful instance of the perverted notion, that religion was meant to be a thing apart from and beside actual life, not the vivifying principle and very mainspring of existence, which makes our simplest duties acts of acceptable worship when performed in its spirit and by its dictation.

LIFE OF
SOPHIA DOROTHEA,
OF HANOVER,
THIRD QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.

THIS Princess was the daughter of the Elector George Louis of Hanover, afterwards George I. of England, and the unfortunate Sophia of Zell.

Deprived of her mother's care by the miserable event which blighted the existence, and unjustly dishonoured the name, of that unhappy lady, Sophia Dorothea spent the early years of her life at Hanover, under the superintendence and instruction of her grandmother the Electress Sophia, and Madame de Sacetôt, a Protestant Frenchwoman, and in the companionship of her brother, the electoral Prince of Hanover and future sovereign of England.

The crown Prince of Prussia had, as we have already seen, spent some time at Hanover when a child, and was to have remained yet longer, had not his quarrels with the electoral Prince necessitated his removal. The ridicule which his unlucky passion for the Margravine Caroline of Anspach met with at a later period by no means tended to reconcile him to his cousin George Augustus; but of the Princess Sophia Dorothea, who was only one year his senior, he seems to have retained a far more favourable impression; so that of the three Princesses who were proposed to Frederic I. as desirable alliances for his son—the Princess Ulrica of Sweden, sister of Charles XII.;

the Princess of Orange, and Sophia Dorothea of Hanover—the crown Prince privately fixed upon the latter, although his father preferred the idea of a matrimonial alliance with Sweden. Therefore, when, under pretext* of an adjustment of the disputes which had arisen between the respective Governments of the two Pomeranias, Finck was despatched to Stockholm to make the necessary investigations previous to entering upon matrimonial negotiations, Prince Frederic William entreated him to send such a report of the Princess Ulrica as might deter his father from carrying out the plan further in that quarter.

In Finck's despatches, accordingly, he painted such a portrait of this Princess, and stated such obstacles to the purposed union, as were, in Frederic's eyes, a quite sufficient bar to its prosecution. He therefore now turned his attention towards the Princess of Hanover; and as this proposition was encountered by no objections, proposals for a marriage between the heir of the Prussian Crown and the Princess Sophia Dorothea of Hanover were duly made and accepted by the respective Courts.

The Electress Sophia, who was anxious that her granddaughter should make a good appearance at Berlin, commissioned her niece, the Duchess of Orleans, to procure the trousseau in Paris; and so splendid a bridal paraphernalia had never yet graced the wedding of any German Princess as that which the gratified Duchess displayed to the wondering, if not admiring, gaze of Louis XIV., who wished that, for the sake of the Paris merchants, all the Princesses of the Empire would send to his capital for their marriage outfit.

With as little delay as the arrangements permitted, the marriage now took place, by proxy, at Hanover, in November, 1706. The bride arrived at Berlin on the 27th of the same month. She was received at some distance from the gates by her father-in-law and her expectant bridegroom.

When the Princess was apprized of the approach of the

* Pöllnitz.

royal *cortège*, she descended from her carriage to meet the King, who did the like on his side. Having embraced her, he presented her to the crown Prince and to his own brothers and their wives; he then placed her at his side in the royal carriage, and returned to Berlin, the crown Prince and the two Margraves accompanying them on horseback. The procession passed through streets lined with eager citizens, all crowding to greet and welcome their future mistress.

The usual ceremony of the stately torch-dance, with twelve lords bearing tapers before, and twelve lords bearing tapers behind the bride and bridegroom; the usual amount of banquets and balls, (which lasted for six weeks, and which were directed by the Margrave Albert, who had such “alternatives de rage et de réconciliation” with the *maîtres des ballets*, as were more amusing than the ballets themselves,)* did not fail to grace this any more than any other royal wedding. Neither did the usual discussions upon the face, figure, bearing, and character of the new crown Princess fail to occupy all the social circles of the city of Berlin for the usual time. From the descriptions of those who knew her well, suppose we, too, draw a portrait of Sophia Dorothea.† She was tall, and at this period, slender in person; she was perhaps never at any time to be called strictly handsome, but her figure was remarkably fine and her proportions exquisite; whilst the singular grace and dignity of her deportment, the charm of her manner, the beauty of her large blue eyes—“such eyes as are seldom seen”‡—and rich brown hair, left little to be desired, in point of personal attraction, in the bride. The bridegroom, on his side, was then sufficiently handsome in face and features, though his figure was bad, and his stature only five feet five. He was sincerely attached to his wife, although rather a faithful than a tender husband. “He had,” says Morgenstern, “none of that astonishing complaisance by which lovers, whether hus-

* Pöllnitz.

† Pöllnitz. Baireuth.

‡ Thiébault, “Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.”

bands or friends, seek to win the favour of the beloved object. As far as can be gathered from the words he occasionally let drop, the crossing of his first love might have been the innocent cause of this;” and as the object of this passion, by the directions of her mother and grandmother, treated him with harshness, “where, then, could he learn to make love?” says the sympathizing member of the smoking college! Sophia Dorothea, then, or “Fiekchen,” as he generally called her—her husband’s education having been so much neglected in this respect—met with but few of the blandishments of affection from him, but its substance was not wanting either in sincerity or depth; and though misunderstandings, which were sedulously fomented by those who had their own interests to serve, subsequently arose between them, he ever regarded her with an attachment which was undiminished, though it might be at times overclouded.

The heart of King Frederic rejoiced at the birth of an heir to the throne, which took place the ensuing year. To announce at once his satisfaction, and his claim upon the Orange succession, he directed that the young Prince should be called Prince of Orange. The Elector of Hanover, the States General, the thirteen Cantons of Switzerland, Queen Anne of England (who was represented by Raby), and the Duchess of Brunswick performed the office of sponsors on the occasion of the christening. Frederic’s rejoicing, however, was but of short duration, for the infant did not survive many months. The discharge of cannon fired in his honour is said to have so startled the little Prince, that he died shortly afterwards.*

It has been before mentioned that Frederic William joined the army under Marlborough in the year 1706, and was present at the battle of Malplaquet in 1709. The anniversary of this day † was always afterwards celebrated by him with much solemnity, and with various ceremonies, commencing

* Vehse.

† “Karakterzüge Friedrich Wilhelms.”

by a "Par-force-Jagd" at Wusterhausen, and terminating by a ball, to which no ladies were admitted, all the females retiring upon these occasions immediately after dinner. Bielefeld gives a description of one of these male terpsichorean performances, which, although it did not take place on the anniversary in question, but on a Sunday, after "church parade" and the mess dinner, may be considered as characteristic of all such occasions. After coffee a dance was proposed; and, to his great astonishment, whilst he was speculating as to where ladies were to be procured, one of the giants of the King's own regiment, with a "black-brown-red face," asked him to honour him with his hand as his partner in the minuet! and the Baron was infinitely amused at beholding all the coy movements of the maiden and the advances of the lover, in the sort of courtship represented by this dance, gone through with the greatest gravity by a set of tall bearded fellows, each six feet high at least.

In 1708, upon the testimony, false, or falsely reported, of the physicians as to the improbability of any future offspring from Sophia Dorothea, took place the marriage of the King with the unfortunate princess whose history we have just terminated.

In the following year the crown Princess again gave birth to a child, which, being a female, was but badly received. This unwelcome little stranger, "*C'est ma petite figure*," says the Margravine of Baireuth. Nevertheless, a poet who was blessed with so lively an imagination as to liken the birth of this child to the Nativity, and the three Frederics, the Kings of Denmark, Poland, and Prussia, (who had met at Potsdam to concert measures against the aggressions of Charles XII. of Sweden, and who unconsciously signed their alliance on the very day of the battle of Pultowa,) to the wise men of the East, received from Frederic 1000 ducats as the reward of his originality. It was at the christening of this child that the contest between Madame de Wartenberg and Madame de Lintelo, which has been before described, took place.

The next child of Sophia Dorothea was once more a boy, and once more, the solemnities attendant upon his reception into the arms of the Church and the dignities of hereditary prince, proved fatal to the delicate heir of the Prussian kingdom. The crown of gold and precious stones which decked his baby brow was supposed to have been too heavy, as a discolouration was observed upon the head,* and this child also died—a repetition of a catastrophe which leads to wondering surmises as to the tender mercies of Prussian nursing in those days. At last, in 1712, the hopes of the nation were once more gratified by the birth of a male heir to the throne. It was, indeed, a delicate, weakly child, and one that gave but little hope of successful rearing, far less that he was one day to become the greatest monarch and the most extraordinary man of his age, the famous Frederic the Great. The life of this child, too, was for a time placed in great jeopardy by the overweening delight of its father, who held it so near the chamber fire, and so stifled it with caresses, that it was in imminent danger of suffocation, and was only rescued with difficulty by the intervention of the nurse.

Shortly after this event, in 1713, occurred the death of King Frederic I., and the consequent accession of his son, Frederic William I. As we have seen so much of the turbulence of the boyish character of this monarch, we may as well proceed to ascertain whether in his case “the boy had proved the father to the man.”

Frederic William was rigidly honest and upright in all his dealings; highly religious, although his religion at times degenerated into bigotry; narrow-minded beyond measure in all that regarded enlightenment, intellectual culture, and such science as was not patent to his apprehension in its immediate practical utility. Rough to a degree of coarseness, which, at some parts of our narrative, we shall have to designate brutality, he was yet withal affectionate. Jealous and suspicious to excess

* Vehse.

in some things, he was nevertheless credulous and simple as a child in others, and as easy to be imposed upon. He was devoted to the good of his people, yet he ruled them with a rod of iron, and at the same time with such a capricious exercise of his absolute power as caused him to be more feared than beloved. But, says Förster,* “the prevailing characteristic of the Prussian people at this time was cowardice: the King had no haughty vassals, no proud prelates and supercilious citizens to control; there was in no rank a sentiment of individual honour.” Prussia was still in feeling but a little member of the German Empire, and needed a stern master to rouse her by his severity to a self-conscious desire for freedom and independence, and that stern master she found in Frederic William, “the hardy architect of the state, as well as of the capital.”†

Frederic William, the great Elector, had laid the solid foundation and erected the substantial walls of the Prussian monarchy: Frederic I. placed a crown as keystone of the stately structure, and gave it the name of kingdom. Frederic William I. strengthened it to stand the test of time, and fortified it for the struggle which he foresaw awaited it, by the accumulation of those resources, and the formation of that splendid army, which, in the hands of his wonderful successor, bore the brunt of battle with the combined Powers of Europe, enabled him to persist when apparently on the verge of ruin, and finally, after a triumphant peace, to retire to the luxurious tranquillity of a stably-enlarged and consolidated kingdom, now holding rank amongst the first Powers of Europe.

Violent in all his emotions, Frederic William retired from the death-bed of his father in a convulsion of grief, which prevented his noticing the congratulations that were offered him on his

* Förster's “Jugendjahre Friedrichs des Grossen.”

† Ibid. Frederic William, says Vehse, “had a passion for building, or rather for making others build:” he ordered his subjects to build in the most arbitrary manner; no remonstrance or appeal was admitted when once his laconic decree, “Der kerl ist reich, soll bauen” (The fellow is rich, shall build), had gone forth.

accession to the throne, and shut himself into his chamber. His first act of authority was to call for a list of the officers of the household, and to draw a pen through the whole number. When Printz, the grand marshal, reappeared in the ante-room with this important paper, Tettau, chief of the *gardes du corps*, remarking the consternation depicted on his countenance, took it from his hand, and glancing at its defacement, exclaimed to the crowd of eager office-holders who thronged about him, "Gentlemen, our old master is dead, and our new one sends you all to the devil."*

The whole Court, says the Marchioness of Baireuth, now changed its aspect as if by magic; the sword and buckler usurped the place of the robe of office, and everything assumed a military character.

Frederic William appointed three new ministers, Grumbkow, Kreutz, and Kraut; the two latter were men of low extraction, but of efficient talent. Grumbkow, who has been mentioned before, played a more prominent part, and his character appears to have been a singular, but by no means a praiseworthy one. His contemporaries state him to have been a man of infinite talent and resource; brilliant, spirituel, versatile, insinuating, but treacherous and unprincipled,† and his actions confirm their report. The character of the King's other principal friend and confidant at this time must be also briefly sketched here.‡ The Prince of Anhalt Dessau, the rough playmate and companion of Frederic William's rough boyhood, was, in his years of maturity, diligent, laborious, and indefatigable in business; a firm friend, but a vindictive enemy. He was also coarse, cruel, and brutal, and his only idea of pleasure was debauch; but his character for valour and conduct as a soldier and a general was beyond all dispute. The bond which more especially united him to the King was that sympathy of taste which made the useful, the beautiful, the end and aim and

* Pöllnitz.

† Pöllnitz. Baireuth.

‡ Ibid.

purpose of life, to combine in the perfection of military discipline.*

In the year 1713 the conclusion of the peace of Utrecht recalled the Prussian troops, which had been engaged in the long wars, begun by the aggressive policy of France, and terminated by the divisions of the English councils. The Prussian arms were, however, soon again called into active service in carrying on the war with Sweden, upon which, however unwillingly, Frederic William saw himself compelled to enter, in alliance with Denmark and Poland. During the campaign of 1715 the Queen followed her husband to the field. The relations of the royal couple, with the King of Denmark, who was also in the camp, appear to have been of the most friendly and confidential nature, during this period. Croissi, the French ambassador to Sweden, also visited the camp, in the hope of being able to mediate between that country and Prussia; but the unsuccessful result of his mission justified the prophecy of the wits of Paris, that their ambassador would prove "too tall for the Laps, too short for the Swedes, and too *frisé* for the King of Prussia." The war was therefore vigorously prosecuted. With the singular history of the capture of the fortifications of Stralsund, and the perilous escape of Charles XII. through the enemy's fleet, my history has nothing to do. I will therefore pass over the intervening time till the return of Sophia Dorothea to Berlin, which was quickly followed by the birth of the Princess Philippina Charlotte, subsequently Duchess

* Frederic William's passion for all that related to military affairs was so strong, that he could scarcely reconcile it to his ideas that heaven itself could present a state of perfect felicity if there were no drill among the angels! It is related that once when very ill, he ordered a hymn to be sung in his presence, which contained the passage, "Naked came I out of the earth and naked shall I return thither again." The King here broke in, exclaiming, "That's a lie, I will be buried in my uniform." And when his pastor remarked that "there would be no soldiers in Heaven," he exclaimed, with evident disturbance, "Wie? Was sapperment? Wie so?" and remained very much depressed for some time after receiving the answer, "Because no soldiers are needed there."—*See* Vehse, "Preussische Hof."

of Brunswick ; that of the Princess Frederica Louisa had taken place in 1714.

The Princess Royal was now eight years old, and projects for her marriage began to float, not only through the mind of her mother, but also through those of other persons, who had a less legitimate interest in it ; and now, alas, began the first of those unhappy intrigues which were destined so soon to interrupt the harmony that had hitherto reigned between the King and Queen.

To make the course of events which I shall have to narrate intelligible, I must now give a short outline of the character of Sophia Dorothea, which, unfortunately perhaps, in many respects resembled that of her husband. She was, what he was not, possessed of more than all the pride of her house. She was, what he was not, ambitious to excess. But the points of resemblance were jealousy, suspicion, caprice, and a tendency to act upon the impulse of the moment, without any regard to consequences. And hence arose a world of minor causes, all tending to the arousing of those unhappy divisions which afterwards so wretchedly rent up the peace of their domestic circle. Added to this, Sophia Dorothea was unable to exist without a confidante, and she was not always judicious in the selection of those whom she trusted. Hence she was apt to bestow her unlimited confidence upon unworthy favourites, who abused it to their own interests, and betrayed her without any reserve. So great was her weakness in this respect, that even though she was apprised of their treachery, she still allowed the most important secrets to leak out by their means, and thus by degrees lost the confidence which her husband had at first reposed in her, when, during his absences in the course of the war, he had given orders that his ministers should consult her upon all emergencies, and take no measure of importance without her express sanction and signature ;* and when in 1719, also, he

* Förster's "*Jugendjahre Friedrichs des Grossen.*"

directed in his will that she should be left Regent, in case of his death, during his son's minority. It must not be supposed, because we have thus given a view of those peculiarities in her character which militated against her own views, and aided those of her enemies so materially, that there was no reverse to the medal, and that Sophia Dorothea had no good or great qualities. On the contrary, her daughter, the Margravine of Baireuth, who by no means spares her mother's faults, describes her as possessing "a good, generous, and benevolent heart." She was a virtuous and faithful wife; and through all the long years of her marriage, and despite all the fearful paroxysms of anger to which she was sometimes subjected by her husband, she preserved an attachment to him which made her an unwearied attendant throughout his many trying illnesses, and a tender nurse during the last painful days of his existence.

The death of the Electress Sophia in 1713 had been followed in the ensuing year by the accession of Sophia Dorothea's father to the throne of England; and to carry out a plan of alliance between her eldest daughter and the Duke of Gloucester, her brother's eldest son, the then heir presumptive to the throne of England, was the darling project which now occupied her mind. The alliance had been talked over whilst the children were yet scarcely out of their cradles. But the King's health was at this time precarious; he was subject to attacks of illness which it was thought might suddenly deprive Prussia of her sovereign; and this had awakened in the breasts of others, ambitious views, which were widely at variance with those of the Queen. She hoped to obtain the Regency during the minority of her son, should anything happen to her husband; but Grumbkow and Anhalt, on the contrary, who built much on the extreme delicacy of the crown Prince, thought that by wedding the Princess Royal to Anhalt's nephew, the young Margrave of Schwedt, heir presumptive to the Crown, not only the Regency, but probably even the disposal of the ultimate succession of the kingdom, with all the allodial estates, might fall into

their hands; they accordingly brought over to their interests the Princess's governess, the daughter of Leti, the Italian historian,* a woman of interested and ambitious character, and of violent temper and passions, yet who seems to have taken pains in the instruction of her pupil. This person was induced to encourage the frequent visits of Schwedt, but he was a big, rude boy, and the little Wilhelmina could not endure him and his horse-play. This child appears to have been of an affectionate disposition, and a nervous, highly-excitabile temperament; and the overwhelming delight of her mother's return, and the caresses which she received on account of her improvement in growth and appearance during the Queen's absence, brought on an illness which nearly proved fatal to her.

The Queen's favourite and confidante at this time was Mademoiselle von Wagnitz,† daughter of the gouvernante of the Margravine Albert, the King's aunt. Mademoiselle von Wagnitz was "belle comme un ange," but stupid and very unprincipled. She carried on a variety of disgraceful intrigues, encouraged by her mother, who, it is said, endeavoured with Kreutz's aid, even to entrap the King by the beauty of her daughter, whilst at the same time she was acquainting Rothenburg, the French minister, with the most private affairs of the Prussian Court, which had come to her knowledge by various underhand means.

Grumbkow, jealous of the attempt upon the King, and apprehensive of its success, set spies to work to discover Mademoiselle Wagnitz's intrigue with Kreutz. Having succeeded in doing so, he revealed all to his master, who, as he abhorred all levity of conduct, especially in the other sex, was very angry, and threatened to dismiss Mademoiselle von Wagnitz; but the Queen being much attached to her,‡ he suffered her to be warned. Sophia Dorothea spoke kindly, though reprovingly, to the erring

* Author of "*Ritratti della casa Elettorale di Brandeburgo.*" "*Hist. of Eliz. of England,*" &c.

† Or Wackenitz.

‡ "Because she had the art of amusing, a merit of no little distinction with the great."—*Pöllnitz.*

damsel, but, far from being penitent, she resented the Queen's interference most insolently, stormed and scolded, and finally went into fits, so alarming the Queen, who was then enceinte, that she became very much indisposed. Even then Mademoiselle Wagnitz would have been forgiven, had she not caused villainous pasquinades against the King and Queen to be posted on the gates of the castle, upon which she was ignominiously dismissed.

The next lady upon whom the Queen bestowed her confidence was Madame de Blaspiel, a far more deserving, but an equally indiscreet person, as we shall presently observe.

Amongst the then reigning sovereigns of Europe were two who were regarded by Frederic William with an extreme degree of admiration and respect; the Czar, Peter the Great, and Augustus the Strong, of Poland.* The occasion of a visit of the former to Berlin may therefore be supposed to have been an important epoch in the annals of the Court. Accordingly, we find very ample details of the event given by several authors, especially by the Margravine of Baireuth, amongst whose early recollections this visit occupies a prominent place. It also affords a curious instance of Frederic William's economy, even upon an occasion, when he might naturally be supposed to wish to display his utmost magnificence, in honour of his illustrious guest. The following are his orders to the general Directory. "I destine 5000 Thalers to defray the Czar's expenses from Memel to Wesel, but you are to make it appear as if it cost me at least 30,000 or 40,000." †

The Czar Peter had already had an interview with Frederic William on the occasion of the marriage of his niece‡ with the Duke of Mecklenburg, at Havelberg, about eleven miles from

* Nov. 11, 1732, Grumbkow wrote to Seckendorf: "The King of Prussia, when he supped with me, repeated more than three or four times that the King of Poland was the greatest prince who had ever reigned, and the second whom he had known after Peter the Great."—See Vehse, vol. ii. p. 309.

† Förster's "Jugendjahre."

‡ Catherine Iwanowna, daughter of the Czar's elder brother, Iwan Alexivwitz, and Duke Charles Leopold of Mecklenburg.

Berlin. In the ensuing year, 1717, accompanied by the Czarina, he paid the visit in question to Berlin.

To the Queen's great dissatisfaction, the place fixed on for the reception of these visitors was her own new palace, to which she had given the name of Monbijou, because, says her daughter, "it was indeed a gem."*

Sophia Dorothea had herself taken great delight in the decoration of this little palace, and the laying out of the gardens; and she looked ruefully forward to the desecration of her little paradise by the intrusion of the Russian Court and their attendants, whose manners were reported strongly to resemble those of the bears, which inhabited the forests of their native country, and who had wrought terrible havoc in the residences allotted for their reception in other capitals. She caused many of the choicest articles to be conveyed away, and denuded the apartments of all such furniture as could be removed without breach of hospitality. Her fears proved to be but too well grounded, for, on her mournfully revisiting it on the departure of her uncouth guests, she found ruin and dilapidation on all sides; a veritable "*désolation de Jérusalem*," writes the Margravine de Baireuth. She was obliged nearly to rebuild the whole edifice.

However, Peter the Great was a powerful ally, and it was necessary to receive him and his Czarina with all apparent cordiality.† The King and Queen accordingly received them on their disembarkation; the Queen gave the Czarina her hand to assist her to land, but repulsed the Czar's attempt to embrace her, possibly with a remembrance of the last embrace to which she had submitted from him when as a child he had so "de-

* Thiébault's account of this palace is more detailed and less inviting. "It was built," says he, "near the Spree, in a low meadow, which was generally inundated; in front was a flat terrace, bordered by willows. It was afterwards nearly surrounded by barracks. It had formerly been the property of Madame de Wartenberg, who offered it to King Frederic I. after the disgrace of her husband. Frederic accepted the gift, but paid its value in money to the giver."—See above Life of Louisa Meck. Schwerin.

† The account of this visit is chiefly taken from "*Mém. de Baireuth*."

ranged her fontange.* The Czarina repeatedly kissed the Queen's hand, and introduced to her the Duke and Duchess of Mecklenburg, who had accompanied them. Her Royal Highness was attended by a most extraordinary crew of "maids of honour," whom the Queen declined to notice; the Czarina, in return, thought it incumbent on her to be very haughty in her manner to the princesses of the blood, and the Queen's other ladies.

The Czar and Czarina afterwards paid a visit to the Queen at Berlin; she received them in the great hall, and preceded them to the *salle des gardes*, giving her hand to the Czarina. The Czar, who had seen the Princess Royal before,† "flayed" her cheeks by a salute from his rough visage, which liberty she resented by a box on the ear.

The Czarina in person was "short and ramassée, very tawny, and with so little air or grace, that her extraction might be easily guessed; and from her toilette she might have been mistaken for a German *comédienne*. Her dress seemed to have been bought at la friperie; it was made à l'antique, very much loaded with silver and tinsel: the design of the stomacher was singular; it was a double eagle, whose plumes were garnished with brilliants of the smallest carat, and very badly mounted. She had a dozen orders, and as many portraits of saints, and relics, attached all along the facing of her robe, so that when she walked one could have imagined one heard the jingling of a mule's bells, all the orders knocking against each other, and producing the same sound."‡

"The Czar, on the contrary, was very tall and well made, his features were handsome, but there was something so rough in his physiognomy that it caused fear: he was attired like a sailor, in a dress all of the same material."§

The Czarina, who spoke and comprehended German very indifferently, at last, tired of her fruitless efforts to understand and

* See Life of Sophia Charlotte.

† During his visit to Berlin in 1712.

‡ Baireuth.

§ Ibid.

be understood in her conversation with the Queen, beside whom she was seated under the daïs, summoned her fool, and talked with her in Russian, frequently bursting into fits of laughter at what she said. This unhappy creature was the Princess Gallitzin. She had been implicated in a conspiracy against the Czar, and twice knouted in consequence. To save her life she had feigned to be mad, until the harsh treatment she received had driven her really so. The Czar, it is said, used to treat her with the greatest brutality,* saying that if she were mad, she ought to be used as if she were; sometimes in a jocose mood, when he had finished his own meal, he would throw the remainder at her head. She now filled the post of fool to the Czarina. At dinner the Czar was seated beside the Queen; the attempt that had been made to poison him in his youth had left an affection of the nerves which occasionally seized him like a convulsion fit; this was the case at dinner, and he made such frightful contortions, and brandished his knife in such alarming proximity to the Queen, that she was upon the point of rising several times. In his attempts to reassure her, the Czar pressed her hand with such force that she was obliged to cry out for mercy; this so much amused him that he laughed heartily, saying "her bones were more delicate than those of his Catherine." After supper he slipped away from the ball which succeeded, quietly, and returned alone and on foot to Monbijou.

One of the remains of barbaric simplicity which still clung to the Czar was, that he asked for whatever he admired. This was the more awkward, because, unlike a barbarian, he admired only that which was really valuable. Amongst the objects thus unceremoniously demanded was a very beautiful cabinet,† entirely fitted up with amber, and immensely costly.

* Pöllnitz.

† Pöllnitz says this was presented at Havelberg by the King, on the Czar's visit to that place in 1716. The King also presented him with a yacht which was valued at 100,000 crowns.—"Mém. pour servir à l'Hist. des Quatre derniers Souverains de Brandebourg."

This was accordingly conceded with as good a grace as could be assumed, and despatched to adorn the palace of the Czar's northern capital.

These troublesome guests took their departure shortly afterwards, leaving the Queen to mourn over, and repair as best she might, the devastation of her favourite residence.

The Prince Royal was now five years old—an age at which it was thought advisable to remove him from the care of Madame de Rocoulles, who will be remembered as the early instructress of Frederic William himself, and place him under male superintendence. Two military governors were therefore selected for this office; one of them was Finck of Finckenstein,* who is said to have been the choice of the Queen herself, possibly from a secret prejudice in favour of the ambassador, whose representations had caused her to be preferred to the Princess Ulrica of Sweden, in the selection of a bride for Frederic William.

The second military governor was Kalkstein: he was a favourite with the King, because he was a good table companion. In addition to these two gentlemen, Duhan de Jandun† was entrusted with the general education of the Prince; he was a Frenchman, and, fortunately for the crown Prince, an elegant scholar, and an upright and amiable man.

It might not have been expected that the King would have

* Finck had been appointed governor to Fred. William himself, after the retirement of Count Alex. Dohna, in 1702. He distinguished himself at the battle of Blenheim, of which he brought the intelligence to Berlin.

† The crown Prince became much attached to Duhan. I transcribe a note written by him to his preceptor at the age of fifteen, which, at least, proves that there was no doubt as to the capability of affection in Frederic's mind at that time, whatever it may prove as to his teacher's success in instructing him in French:

“ Mon cher Duhan,

“ Je vous promets que quand j'aurez mon propre argent en main, je Vous donnerai annuellement 1400 écus par an, et je Vous aimerais encor un peu plus qu'à present s'il me l'est possible.

“ FREDERIC, Pr. r.

“ Potsdam, le 20 Juin, 1727.”

chosen such a person for his son's education, which he wished to be, in the most exclusive sense, a military one ; but Jandun had been with his pupil, the son of Count Dohna, at the siege of Stralsund, and Frederic William had conceived a respect for the preceptor who accompanied his charge to the field of battle. To this lucky accident, therefore, was attributable the appointment of Duhan, to whom Frederic the Great owed all the knowledge he acquired in his youth, as well as that taste for learning which in later times acquired him the title of the "Philosopher of Sans Souci." To these gentlemen the King himself furnished instructions, which entered into the most minute details not only of the education of his son, but even of his toilet, occupations and recreations. Of these instructions a specimen will be presently offered.

The course of the crown Prince's education was, by his father's directions, to embrace geography and history ; the latter to be studied on a system of Frederic William's own propounding. Ancient history was to be cursorily passed over ; that of the middle ages to be left untouched, but that of modern times, especially of the last one hundred and fifty years, and of the connected houses of Brandenburg, Hanover and Brunswick, to be studied with attention, because "domestic has more force than foreign example." In prosecution of this idea, when the "*Theatrum Europæum*" was proposed as the best compendium of history for the Prince's use, his father enjoined that the study of Greek and Roman history should also be entirely omitted, because "*elles ne sont bonnes a rien.*" The Prince was to learn much by heart to strengthen his memory. The German language, though not altogether left out of this catalogue of princely studies, was only mentioned cursorily, as of slight importance ; so that when, after his accession to the throne, Professor Gotteshed suggested to Frederic II. that the German language required encouragement, "Yes," said he, "I have read no German book from my youth, *Je le parle comme un cocher*, and I am now too old to im-

prove." The French language was therefore to be chiefly cultivated by the crown Prince; Latin was absolutely forbidden. An anecdote is related, that the King, once coming in when the Prince was taking his lesson, from an earlier tutor, who was employed for a time, heard some barbarous Latin expressions, and asked the teacher what he was doing; he replied, "Sire, I am explaining the *auream bullam*.—" "I will *auream bullam* you," interrupted the King, in a rage, and, raising his cane, he drove the unlucky preceptor from the room and his office at the same moment.

This early neglect of the learned languages Frederic the Great never repaired, although he constantly regretted his ignorance of them to the last.

The following is an extract from the above-mentioned instructions, delivered by the King to Duhan, at a later period :*—

"Sept. 3rd, 1721.—On Sunday he (the crown Prince) shall rise at seven o'clock. As soon as he has put on his slippers, he shall kneel down by the bed-side, and say a short prayer aloud, so that all in the room can hear. The prayer, which he must learn by heart, is as follows." [Here follows the prayer to be made use of.] "As soon as he has done this he shall dress himself as quickly as possible, wash himself clean, and have his hair dressed and powdered. The prayer and the dressing must be finished† in a quarter of an hour, by which time it will be a quarter past seven. When this is done his servants and Duhan shall come in, in order to hold the long prayer, kneeling. Duhan shall read a chapter out of the Bible, and sing some hymn, until a quarter to eight; then all the servants shall withdraw, and Duhan shall read the Gospel for Sunday, with my son, explain it briefly, and also bring forward what is necessary to true Christianity, and make him repeat Noltenius's catechism. Then my son shall come down to me, go to church and breakfast with me, and then the rest of the day is before him.

* Preuss, "Jugendjahre Fried. des Gross," vol. i. "Lebens Geschichte."

† Orig. "fix und fertig seyn."

In the evening he shall bid me good night at ten o'clock, go direct to his room, undress quickly, wash his hands," &c. "On Monday he shall be called at half-past five, and you are to instruct him that, as soon as that is done, he shall get up immediately, instead of turning over to rest again; he must kneel down and repeat the short prayer, as on Sunday; he must then as quickly as possible put on his shoes and stockings, and wash his face and hands, but not with soap; he shall then put on his casaquin, and have his hair dressed and combed, but not powdered. Whilst he is having his hair dressed and combed, he shall take his tea and breakfast, so that is all one work. This must all be done before half-past six." "At a quarter to eleven he shall wash his face with water only, and his hands with soap, put on his coat quickly, be powdered, and come to me."

With the like minuteness, are likewise prescribed the studies of every hour of every day in the week. But, above all other things, the taste for military pursuits was to be inculcated in the education of the crown Prince. "You are to impress upon my son," says Frederic William, "that nothing in the world but the sword can procure him fame and honour; he will be contemptible before the world if he does not love it, and seek his only glory in it." Of the success of Frederic William's system of education we shall have more to say by-and-by.

In the meantime the crown Prince was for a time in great danger of being left fatherless, with the prospect of a long minority, and a disputed regency; for in 1719 the King, who had gone to his regiment at Brandenburg, was seized with a violent fit of illness, and but little hope was entertained of his recovery. The Queen was sent for in haste. When she arrived the King presented her with a packet containing his will, by which he had left to her the regency of the kingdom, appointing the Emperor and the King of England, guardians to the crown Prince. He enjoined upon her the strictest secrecy as to the contents of the document. Grumbkow and Anhalt,

hearing that the will had been thus confided to the custody of the Queen, and anxious beyond measure to ascertain its contents, applied themselves to Madame de Blaspiel, offering her a bribe to procure them information on the subject, and to interest the Queen in their favour. Madame de Blaspiel was justly indignant, and informed the Queen; she, in her turn, made the King acquainted with their conduct; and the consequence was, that when Anhalt and Grumbkow presented themselves to demand an audience, they were received by the Queen, who, confident in her position, displayed no lack of hauteur, informing them that the King was at that time too ill to see them, but that he requested they would return to Berlin, there to keep order during his absence.

On Anhalt's endeavouring to speak, she feigned to be so overwhelmed with the fatigue of her arduous duties as nurse, that she could not listen to him. Thus foiled, Grumbkow and Anhalt had nothing for it but to retire, with an additional degree of ill-will towards the Queen, and of curiosity respecting the all-important document with which she was intrusted. An accidental circumstance procured them the means of acquiring information on this subject. Madame de Blaspiel had allowed Count de Manteufel,* the Saxon ambassador, to obtain a complete influence over her heart, and part of the correspondence between them having fallen into the King's hands, he, who had "never learned to make love," did not understand it, but gave the letters to Grumbkow, in order to ascertain whether they threatened any danger to the State. Grumbkow joyfully turned this knowledge of Madame de Blaspiel's secret to account, by employing Manteufel to win her over, to endeavour, if possible, to withdraw the will from the Queen's hands, or at least to gain a knowledge of its contents.

Madame de Blaspiel was for a long time incorruptible; but the reproaches of her lover at length prevailed over her fidelity, and she besought the Queen to inform her of the contents of

* He was a Prussian by birth, but had entered the Saxon service.

the document which was evidently matter of so much self-gratulation to her. Her too-confiding mistress not only allowed herself to be decoyed into this foolish compliance, but even suffered the will itself, to remain for some time in the hands of Madame de Blaspiel. Its contents, thus divulged, became matter of somewhat uncomfortable discussion between the two worthy allies. Jealous of the influence of the Queen, which was still in the ascendant, as the King, having fallen into a sort of hypochondriac state after his recovery, rarely left her society, they sought by all means in their power to lessen her influence. She was known to be fond of cards. It was ascertained that she had been obliged to borrow 30,000 crowns secretly, and the disappearance of a pair of brilliant ear-rings, the King's present, which Sophia Dorothea rarely wore, because she had "lost" them several times, put it into the subtle brain of Grumbkow that they had gone to pay her debts at play. He informed the King of his suspicions. The Queen, on her part, forewarned by Monsieur de Kamecke, whom Grumbkow had tried to induce to join in his plans, complained to her husband of the intrigues which Grumbkow was carrying on against her. The affair of Clement* meantime supervened, and amongst the persons implicated by his confessions, and those of his accomplices Lehman and Boube, was M. de Troschke, gentleman of the chamber to the late King, and spy in the Swedish war. Amongst his papers were found some letters from Madame de Blaspiel, which spoke very unguardedly of the King. Grumb-

* Clement was a Hungarian nobleman of doubtful origin. He gained access to the King, and succeeded in entirely convincing him, by means of forged letters from Prince Eugene and others, of the existence of a plot between the Courts of Vienna and Dresden, to take him prisoner, educate the crown Prince in the Roman Catholic religion, and place him upon the throne under the guardianship of the Emperor. Anhalt and Grumbkow, and even the Queen herself, were accused of being privy to the conspiracy. Strange as it may seem, so great was the King's confidence in this man, that even after his confession he could scarcely bring himself to believe him guilty, and almost repented having suffered him to be executed; although no mercy was shown to his less guilty accomplices, and many entirely innocent persons were imprisoned on his accusation.

know, who suspected her of having informed the Queen of his plots, was delighted to bring these letters to Frederic William, whom he irritated against her additionally. She was arrested and examined; on her trial she avowed undauntedly that she had made use of the expressions in question, with respect to the unjust imprisonment of Kamecke, which had taken place shortly before.*

The Queen meanwhile was in an agony; the will was still in Madame de Blaspiel's keeping, and how to extricate it, before the sealing of her effects should bring to the King's knowledge the fact, that it had been allowed to pass out of his wife's hands, was a matter of extreme difficulty. In this emergency Sophia Dorothea had recourse to her chaplain, a mild and benevolent man, who went to the officer commissioned to seal up Madame de Blaspiel's effects, and succeeded in rescuing the important document in time.

But the melancholy position of her favourite to whom she was sincerely attached, and the loss of her society and friendship, weighed upon the Queen's spirits;† and during the period preceding the birth of the Princess Sophia Dorothea, she was

* Pöllnitz gives a different version of this affair, but as the Margravine of Baireuth refers to the Queen as her authority, I have followed her account. Pöllnitz says that the correspondence on account of which Madame de Blaspiel was arrested had been carried on with Flemming, the Prussian Resident at Dresden. The Margravine de Baireuth also gives an account of a horrible conspiracy of Anhalt and Grumbkow to destroy the King and the Prince Royal at the theatre, hints of which were given by Madame de Blaspiel to the Queen, who prevented her husband from going; but as this is nowhere else mentioned, and may be supposed to have originated in the ill-will of the Queen's party to the Grumbkowists, I have not inserted an account of it. On her second examination, by the venal judge Katsch, the unfortunate Madame de Blaspiel behaved with the greatest courage, repelling with womanly dignity the insults she was subjected to in the examination. She was, however, sent to the fortress of Spandau, where she was twice inhumanly kept for twenty-four hours without food, in a room whose bare walls were the only accommodations permitted by her cruel jailors. She was afterwards more leniently treated, but her imprisonment continued for a year, when she was allowed her liberty, although under sentence of banishment. Frederic the Great, to please his mother, afterwards made her governess to his two younger sisters.

† "Mém. de Baireuth."

a prey to the deepest melancholy. Although her Oberhofmeisterin, Madame de Kamecke, was an excellent woman, she by no means supplied the place of Madame de Blaspiel, and Madame de Rocoules was too old to be much of a companion. In her usual necessity for a confidante, the Queen turned to the Princess Royal, now nearly ten years old, and seems, after various trials of the child's discretion, to have made her the depository of her secrets, a dignity which entailed upon the poor child the consequences of Mlle. Leti's jealousy and disappointed curiosity, in the shape of kicks, cuffs, blows and bruises,* which harsh treatment, partly out of fear, and partly out of a remains of affection for Leti, the Princess concealed from her mother's knowledge.

About this time dysentery broke out frightfully at Berlin; the doors of those who had it were barricaded, under the idea that it was infectious. The King, Queen, and Princess Royal, were at Wusterhausen at the time. The King was attacked by the epidemic; during his illness, although the weather was hot, the royal apartment was kept carefully closed, whilst a large fire was constantly maintained. It is not astonishing that the child, whose place was to remain close by this fire the whole day, and whose complaints of headache and restlessness at night Madame de Kamecke quieted by giving her a psalm or two to learn by heart, should have taken the complaint, which brought her, as well as her sister Frederica, to the verge of death, whilst it carried off the Prince William.†

The conduct of Leti now became too gross and violent for further concealment. She quarrelled with Eversmann, the Kammerdiener, who immediately made revelations of her treatment of the Princess; she was dismissed in disgrace; in revenge for her dismissal, she did not content herself with only carrying off the chief part of the Princess's wardrobe, but also spread all sorts of reports injurious to her at Hanover, whither

* "Mém. de Baireuth."

† This prince was born shortly after the disgrace of Mlle. Wagnitz.

she had retired. The consequences of these reports,—that the Princess Royal of Prussia was deformed, passionate, and subject to epilepsy,—were soon apparent in the unwillingness of the English Court to carry out the arrangements for the double marriage, which, to the Queen's great satisfaction, had been agreed upon during a visit which she had made to Hanover some time previously. Besides, neither the Princess of Wales nor Lady Darlington, the King's ambitious mistress, wished that the Duke of Gloucester should marry into a powerful house, and bring home a Princess, who perhaps, might counteract their own influence.

It was in consequence of these misrepresentations and dissentient views, that Mlle. de Pöllnitz was despatched, as we have before seen,* to ascertain the actual qualifications, both mental and physical, of the young Princess. But Mlle. de Pöllnitz was interested to discover defects. "She found fault," says the Margravine de Baireuth, "with my dress, my shape, my air." The Queen was weak enough to be influenced against the evidence of her own senses by Mlle. de Pöllnitz's representations, and, to improve her figure, she caused the poor Princess to be screwed into corsets, which rendered her "black with the stoppage of the circulation."†

Still the affair lingered on, the King was angry, and the Queen was mortified; at length, in a visit which she paid to her father, in 1723, she prevailed on him to promise both to give his consent to the marriages, and to come to Berlin to judge for himself as to the truth of the reports concerning her daughter.

Triumphantly she now wrote to her husband that the affair was settled beyond dispute. Great preparations were made in Berlin and Charlottenburg for the reception of King George I., who arrived at the latter place on the evening of October 8. The King and Queen, and all the Princes and Princesses were assembled to receive him when he alighted from his carriage.

* See Life of Sophia Charlotte.

† Baireuth.

On entering his chamber, to which he was accompanied by all the royal family, he took a candle, and holding it before the Princess Royal, surveyed her from head to foot, an ordeal which greatly disconcerted her. At supper the King of England was seized with a kind of fit,* he attempted to leave the room, but fell on the floor, and remained insensible for some time. On his recovery, however, he insisted on seeing the Queen, his daughter, to her apartment, as if nothing had occurred. The next day he was sufficiently recovered to go out, and the treaty of the double marriage was once more talked over. His Majesty of England declared that he was willing to give his own consent, and that he only awaited that of his Parliament to ratify the agreement. The King of Prussia was thus induced to renew his former treaty with England, and measures were concerted for the limitation of the ambitious views which Russia seemed inclined to advance.

It was then agreed that Frederic William and Sophia Dorothea should return the visit at Goehr, and the two monarchs parted mutually satisfied.

The Queen had been for some time afflicted with a mysterious complaint, which completely baffled the skill of her medical attendants. On the night preceding the intended departure for Goehr, Frederic William was roused by the intelligence that his wife was taken seriously ill; in great alarm he hastened to her bedside, and assisted to apply the remedies which were deemed advisable, when, to the astonishment of her attendants, the Queen's sufferings terminated in the birth of a daughter. This *dénouement*, and the part which he was called upon to act in it, greatly diverted the King, more especially as, no such event having been anticipated, neither baby-linen nor nurse had been provided. This infant was christened the following day by the name of Amelia.† The Prince and Princess Royal of Prussia,

* Baireuth. This seizure appears to have been premonitory of the one which carried off George the First on his journey to Osnabruck in 1727.

† Afterwards Abbess of Quedlinburg.

the Duke of Gloucester, and the Princess Amelia of England, now considered as respectively betrothed, were named sponsors, and it was in honour of the English Princess that the child received the name of Amelia.

During the King's absence on his visit to Goehr the Queen's enemies were not idle; it was represented to him that the knowledge of her situation had been purposely withheld from him; in short, that he had cause for jealousy. Credulous, as usual, he allowed himself to be influenced by these ridiculous insinuations, and, on his return to Berlin, he shut himself up in his room, instead of going directly to the Queen, as was customary with him; being necessitated, also, on going to supper, to pass through his wife's room, when she was still confined to her bed, he did so hastily, without speaking to her. Astonished at this unusual conduct, on his return she called him, and tenderly reproached him for his unkindness; upon which he burst into the most violent reproaches for her supposed infidelity. The Queen, whose conduct in this respect had ever been above suspicion, replied by assurances which did but the more irritate him. Furious with passion, he raised his hand as if to strike her, when Madame de Kamecke seized his arm, telling him that "if he had only come there to kill his wife, he had better have kept away." Frederic William, unused to such bold language, thereupon retired, saying that they should hear from him on the morrow. The next day he accordingly summoned Madame de Kamecke, the physician Stahl, and his regimental surgeon, Holzendorf, to hold a sort of court-martial upon the Queen's conduct. Being assured by all of them that his suspicions were without the shadow of a foundation, and, being, moreover, soundly scolded by the intrepid Madame de Kamecke, who told him that "if he were not her king she would strangle him on the spot" for his insulting suspicions of herself and her mistress, and that he did not deserve such a wife, he consented to be brought to reason, and to beg pardon of the Queen, to whom he said that the excess of his affection had led him to the

violence of which he had been guilty. And she, says Pöllnitz, being accustomed to his “vivacities,” made no difficulty about a reconciliation.

We now come to a break between the hitherto inseparable allies Grumbkow and Anhalt. The former, thinking it well to be upon the winning side, had reconciled himself to the Queen during her father’s visit to Charlottenburg; and when Anhalt pressed upon the King that his father-in-law had taken no further steps in the matter of the marriages, and otherwise so worked upon his mind as to induce him to inform the Queen that, if these marriages were not carried out within two months, he would hear no more of them, but choose another son-in-law—Grumbkow not only did not support his ally, but rather tried by underhand means to defeat his schemes, and even obtained from the King the concession that the negotiations respecting this much-vexed matrimonial alliance should be left in the hands of the Queen.

A cause, trivial and even absurd in itself, perhaps contributed as much as anything to the miscarriage of these negotiations. Frederic William’s military tastes have before been adverted to. During his father’s lifetime he had commenced the formation of a regiment of tall recruits, which he had been obliged to keep sedulously concealed from the paternal eye, exercising them privately at Mittenwalde,* and giving orders that should the King pay one of his infrequent visits to that place, they should instantly conceal themselves, and remain *perdus* till his departure. On Frederic William’s accession, he had felt deeply grieved and astonished that the citizens of Berlin should refuse to receive his pet giants into quarters among them. The great Elector had built a house and laid out gardens in the Dutch style at Potsdam; these gardens his grandson turned into parade grounds, and here he established his “blue children,” as they were called on account of the colour of their uniform. Bielefeld gives a description of this regiment of colossi. “Na-

* See Morgenstern.

ture," he says, "who has been so lavish to them in one respect, has been but a niggardly step-dame in others. They had either ugly faces, or crooked legs, or some other defect."* However, Frederic William lavished enormous sums upon them: some of the peculiar giants had as much as two florins pay per day, and were allowed to carry on a trade besides. No sum was considered, by the usually parsimonious King, too large to be paid for a huge grenadier; and those potentates who wished to be on a friendly footing with the King of Prussia, had nothing to do but to search their dominions for the tallest specimens of humanity contained in them. A present of a recruit of six feet might be counted on to secure Frederic William's friendship; of six feet two, his warmest alliance; and so on in proportion.

The tallest and finest of these grenadiers was an Irishman, by name James Kirkland, whose procural and transmission from his native bogs to the parade-ground at Potsdam, had cost Frederic William upwards of 1200*l.* sterling.† But no one whose stature had obtained a more than ordinary growth was safe from the hands of his Majesty's recruiters. At one time a young man, by name Schindorf, who had been diligently prosecuting the study of law for five years at Halle, disappeared suddenly; he was a very tall man; the dreaded recruiting Wagen had been seen in the neighbourhood; the combination was easy, the deduction certain. The college sent up a remonstrance, March 10, 1731, upon this misappropriation of mind to the mere purposes of matter. The King's answer was given

* Although Bielefeld speaks thus disparagingly of the personal appearance of his blue children, the King, like other partial parents, greatly admired their "ugly faces." He had all their portraits taken and hung in the gallery of the palace; and of one, who was super-eminently gigantic, he caused a statue to be made, and coloured as near to the tints of life as possible!—*See Vehse.* Frederic the Great had the bad taste to dismantle this gallery of what might be called "the beauties" of Frederic William the First, on his accession.

† The Prussian Minister in England, in his account to the King of Prussia of the expenses incurred by the capture, outfit, and journey of this recruit, makes the whole amount to 1266*l.* 10*s.*

in his usual concise style, "Shall not reason. Is my subject." *

His passion for tall soldiers led him to wish to raise a race of large people, so as to be able to recruit his great regiment without trouble. One day meeting a very tall and well-made village girl in the neighbourhood of Potsdam, he asked her to take a note, which he wrote on the spot, to the captain of his regiment. Either suspecting something, or being in a hurry, the girl gave the note to a little old woman whom she fell in with, and charged her to deliver it as directed. This note contained an order to the captain to have the bearer instantly married to the tallest man in the regiment, whose name was specified. On being acquainted with his fate, and introduced to his bride, the poor young fellow was in despair. He begged and entreated, fell on his knees and wept, but all to no purpose; the King's will was law, and the matrimonial noose was tied. However, the King, on hearing of the exchange of brides that had been made, allowed the marriage to be dissolved.

But it was not only in his own dominions, and at the expense of his own subjects, that Frederic William indulged his foible. His kidnappers roamed over the territories of his neighbours in all sorts of disguises, and incurred all sorts of dangers in quest of tall recruits. At one time an Italian priest † was seized as he was performing mass in a village church in the Tyrol. At another, the tall Austrian envoy Bentenrieder, whose carriage had broken down at the gates of Halberstadt, and who had left his servants with it whilst he himself went to seek assistance, was taken possession of. These outrages had taken place in Hanover as well as in other States: the people were everywhere

* Förster, "Jugendjahre." The University of Halle sent up a remonstrance to the King, dated March 10, 1731, because "Johan Gottlieb Schindorf studiosus juris, der, seit 1726, die Collegia fleissig abgewartet, von einigen soldaten in der öffentlichen strasse angegriffen, in einen zugemachten Wagen geworfen, und zum Stadthor hinausgeführt worden wäre." The King wrote, as usual, upon the margin of the document, "Sollen nicht raisonniren, ist mein Unterthan."

† Thiébault says this was the Abbé Bastiani.

up in arms on account of the Prussian man-stealers. The King of England remonstrated, but in vain; he then gave orders that these marauders should be arrested wherever seen: other princes acted on the impulse thus given; Prussian enrollers taken in Hesse and Bavaria were immediately hung. This was touching Frederic William on a tender point. "He thought in his conscience God had as good as made tall people for him, who knew so well how to prize them;"* and he was furious because other rulers, who did not know how to make use of giants, nor yet how to maintain them so well, contested his divinely-ceded right to them.† He set, therefore, no bounds to his indignation against George I., whom he looked upon as the ringleader of this nefarious plot to deprive him of his rightful property. He told the Queen that he would hear no more of an alliance with England, and that he had made up his mind to bestow his eldest daughter upon the Margrave of Schwedt. In her trouble the Queen applied to Grumbkow, and he managed so to mediate by procuring the liberation of several Prussian recruiters, that matters were again put on a better footing, and the halting plan of the matrimonial alliance was once more set in motion. But there was no longer the same friendly feeling between the two monarchs. Frederic William had been wounded too deeply either entirely to forget or to forgive, and George I. still procrastinated in the affair of the marriages.

A comic scene now took place between Grumbkow and Anhalt. The latter, annoyed at Grumbkow's having acted as

* Morgenstern.

† Some of his subjects sought to convince Frederic William of the wrong he was committing in kidnapping recruits, by means of his well-known religious feelings, and texts from the Law of Moses were quoted to him; as, for instance, Ex. xxi. 16, "Whoso stealeth a man and selleth him . . . shall die the death." "But," says Vehse, "these were citations from the Old Testament," and Frederic William did not consider that part of the Bible necessary to salvation; besides, other people cited passages also out of the Old Testament, as 1 Sam. viii. 11 and 16, to prove that it was a prerogative of sovereignty for the king to take the people's "sons and appoint them for himself for his chariots, and to be his horsemen, and to run before him," and "to take their goodliest young men, and put them to his work."

pacificator in the manner just described, accused him of having received English pay. Grumbkow retaliated by demanding the 5000 Thalers which Anhalt had promised his daughter as a marriage portion in the days of their friendship. The Prince denied; Grumbkow insisted; mutual recriminations led to a challenge. Now fighting was not Grumbkow's forte. He had lain in a ditch through the battle of Malplaquet; "hurt his leg," so as to put himself *hors de combat*, at the beginning of the siege of Stralsund; managed to slip, though not without leaving tatters of his reputation behind him, through one duel with the Count de Dohna, and another with Goerz, the ambassador of Holstein. But Anhalt was a fire-cater; Grumbkow's teeth chattered at the thought of him. The fatal day arrived, and at the appointed hour, at the appointed place, stood the terrible "La Barbe,"* foaming with rage. Grumbkow dared not face his angry opponent; he flung away his sword and threw himself at Anhalt's feet, imploring his forgiveness. Anhalt gave but one glance of disgust at the abject figure before him, turned his back, mounted his horse, and galloped off, leaving Grumbkow to vow eternal hatred and revenge.

Whilst these private *tracasseries* were occupying the attention of the courtiers at Berlin, the proposed marriage between the Archduchess Maria Theresa and the Infant of Spain caused the speedy conclusion of an alliance between France, England, and Prussia.† The King of England had promised that the conclusion of this treaty should hasten the performance of that for the marriages; but no result followed. Once again Frederic William and Sophia Dorothea visited George I. at Hanover, and the latter was left with her father to bring the matter, if possible, to a conclusion; but when she applied to the English ministers to draw up the marriage contract, they replied that they had no power to do so; and when she remonstrated with her father, he answered that the Duke of Gloucester was as

* Name by which Anhalt is called in Seckendorf's "Journal Secret."

† Treaty of Hanover, 1725.

yet too young to marry, and that things had better remain as they were. Finding all further advances impossible, the Queen returned, indignant and mortified, to Berlin. Frederic William was incensed against her, because, he said, she had amused him with false promises; and with the originality which usually characterized his wrath, he caused the communication between their apartments to be walled up.*

Meanwhile the Prince and Princess Royal were now of an age to interest themselves in the contest which was going on with regard to their respective destinies. The brother and sister had ever since their childhood been united by the most tender affection — an affection which never slackened, although the course of events might somewhat chill the glow of its youthful fervour. The Margravine of Baireuth was always Frederic's favourite sister; he admired her talent and wit, and speaks of her as a "*fine mouche qui en sait plus qu'on n'en croit.*" Her death, the intelligence of which reached him after the disastrous battle of Hochkirch, cost him the bitterest sorrow, whilst her affection for him led her to brave even the much-dreaded displeasure of her mother, by consenting to marry so much below the just pretensions of the Princess Royal of Prussia.

We have seen that, to give a military bent to his son's tastes, was Frederic William's chief desire, in the course of education which he had prescribed for him. In furtherance of this view, he used himself frequently to take the Prince Royal with him to reviews and parades, or hunting excursions, starting as early as three or four o'clock in the morning, and not returning till late at night. Yet this very earnestness to make Frederic a soldier and a sportsman seems to have defeated its own end: the delicate boy took a dislike to the rough sports of the field and the coarse life of the camp, with its enforced attendance on drill and parade.† His health, always feeble, was unequal to

* The partition remained for six weeks.

† Thiébauld speaks of an officer who, during thirty years' service, had never been absent from parade.

the exertions required of him. Seckendorf, speaking in 1725, says, "The King so fatigues him with early rising and rough exercises, that, whilst still in his childhood, he looks as old and stiff as if he had gone through many campaigns." He began, besides, to develope a taste for music and books, especially for poetry, and to manifest a refinement of mind and manners which irritated his blunt father very greatly. Certainly there could have been but little to interest a refined mind in the "Par-force-Jagde" of which such frequent mention is made among the royal amusements. Upon these hunting expeditions a regular battue of large game was made. Sometimes as many as from 3000 to 4000 wild swine, or 1500 deer,* would be killed in one day, as upon one occasion, in the year 1726, when 1400 deer were driven into an inclosure made on purpose, and there slain.† The Prince was present on this occasion, and received a severe fall from an unmanageable horse, which probably did not increase his liking for the amusement.

A ridiculous anecdote is related of one of Frederic William's gigantic favourites, the Count von Haack; on one of these hunting parties, a fine boar came rushing directly upon him; his hunting spear broke short off, only wounding the furious beast; no time was to be lost: Haack, like a very colossus, stretched himself across the path, and the boar rushed between his legs, carrying the Count off upon a most uncom-

* The sale of the flesh of these animals was managed in a very arbitrary manner by Frederic William. All that was not wanted for the consumption of the palace was ticketed with a certain price, and sent amongst the tradesmen of Berlin, who dared neither refuse to receive nor to pay for it. Occasionally, by way of joke, the carcasses of the swine would be especially ticketed for those citizens, who happened to be of the Jewish persuasion. The Queen, out of her income, had to find not only the clothing for the family, as has been stated above (see Introductory Chapter), but also the powder and shot consumed in the chase, in acknowledgment for which she received the proceeds of the sale of all the pheasants and partridges not required for the royal table; and if the King was too ill himself to shoot for her behoof, he sent one of the gentlemen who were reckoned the best shots to keep up the charter. Frederic William's own shooting generally bagged about eighty head of game out of from 120 to 130 shots.

† Förster, "Jugendjahre."

fortable saddle, with his face to the tail of his madly-terrified steed ! *

But to return to the failure of the King's wishes for the education of his son. With regard to religious matters also, which, we were about to say, ranked *next* to military ones in Frederic William's mind, too much enforced attention begot disgust in the wearied young minds which were compelled to attend to the reading of long treatises on scholastic theology, and to the writing of confessions of faith occupying "eighteen sheets of paper,"—the system pursued with both Frederic and his elder sister.† The King's health had suffered by the excessive drinking to which he was always prone, and he once more fell into a state of religious hypochondriacism. Francke the Pietist, who has been before mentioned, gained at this time great ascendancy over his mind. "All pleasures, even hunting," says the Margravine of Baireuth, "were now looked upon as deadly sins." The discourse at dinner consisted chiefly of quotations from Scripture. The King read a sermon afterwards, and a hymn was sung by his valet-de-chambre. Sometimes, do what they would, the youthful spirits of the Prince and Princess, who with their mother were in constant attendance upon the King in these seasons of depression, would break through all control, and find vent in a burst of laughter at something irresistibly comic in the manner of these performances ; but such outbreaks were soon drowned by the thunder of their father's wrath.

But we now come to a more painful part of the history of the royal family. Disgusted at the above-mentioned effeminate tastes of his heir, the King lavished marks of affection, which were not frequent with him,‡ upon the Princess Royal, whilst he treated the crown Prince with coldness, neglect, and even

* See "Karakterzüge aus dem Leben, F. W. I."

† That of the Margravine of Baireuth is preserved.

‡ Marks of affection were seldom showed by Frederic William to his children ; "rare kisses," or a stroke on the cheek, were sometimes bestowed on his favourite for the time being. The Princess Ulrica was high in his esteem, because she "never laughed, and was never discontented."—*Preuss*, "Jugendjahre."

unkindness. Sophia Dorothea could bear no rival in the King's affection either for herself or her favourite child ; this led her, on her part, to various injudicious acts of favouritism ; unfortunately, too, the roughness of their father's manner always inspired his children with some degree of fear, and they, especially the crown Prince, evinced more tractability to their mother's milder sway than to the mandates of their father. The Queen was foolish enough not to see that, by taking advantage of this, she was effectually widening the separation which was already beginning to divide the father and son, and entailing upon herself and her children a suite of unhappy results which rendered them all, for a time, perfectly wretched. " Whatever," says the Margravine of Baireuth, " my father ordered my brother to do, my mother commanded him to do the very reverse." The mother was obeyed, and the father justly exasperated. Prince Frederic fell into a sort of disgrace ; his mother and sisters were ordered to hold no communication with him. Sophia Dorothea, nevertheless, corresponded with him by means of her eldest daughter. Upon one occasion, 1726, the Princess relates that her mother had ordered her to write "*plusieurs choses de contrabande*" to the Prince. She was seated at this occupation, when the sound of the King's entrance obliged her, hastily to thrust her papers behind an Indian cabinet, near which she was sitting, and put the inkstand in her pocket, where she held it for fear of its upsetting. The King by some chance began to admire this cabinet, and to try the lock ; to draw off his attention, the Queen desired him to decide between the merits of her lap-dog and that of the Princess. The latter testified so naïvely to the qualities of her pet, that her father was diverted, and gave her such a hearty hug that the inkstand was overturned in her pocket, " soaking her to the skin " with its contents, which also ran down upon the floor, so that she dared not move for fear of revealing the catastrophe.

But a new actor now appeared upon the stage ; this was Count Seckendorf, who had commanded in the famous attack

on the fortifications at Stralsund, and who afterwards, as Austrian ambassador at Berlin, gained the most extraordinary influence, not only over the King, but over the whole Court.*

Of Seckendorf's character Pöllnitz gives an account but little flattering. "He affected," says he, "the German honesty, with which he was perfectly unacquainted, and under the deceitful appearance of integrity carried out all the principles of Macchiavelli. With the meanest self-interest he combined the roughest manners. Lies were so familiar to him, that he had lost the habit of truth from his childhood. He had the soul of a usurer, now in the body of a warrior, now in that of a merchant. False oaths and the vilest debasement cost him nothing when he had an end to gain; he was sparing of his own goods, but lavish of the gold of his master." But Pöllnitz found scandal as easy as Seckendorf found lies, and perhaps the latter's character may be relieved of at least part of the burden thus laid upon it. Although it must be confessed that in the services he rendered to his Court, he stooped even to the most underhand means, and intrigued with high and low.

This singularly-qualified agent then, did Austria, alarmed at the above-mentioned alliance between Prussia, England, and France, despatch to Berlin. The mission was an informal one, its aim to detach Prussia, hitherto so faithful an ally of the Empire, from this formidable coalition.

Seckendorf's first move showed that he knew the mainspring of Frederic William's character; he appeared as a mere visitor at Berlin, taking care to have it reported that he had come expressly to see a review of the best troops in the world. He was pointed out, as having this wish, to the King, who entered into conversation with him: in the course of the interview, Seckendorf contrived to display in glowing colours the Austrian attach-

* Frederic Henry, nephew of Veit Ludwig, Count de Seckendorf, author of the "History of Lutheranism." He was uncle of Baron Christian Louis de Seckendorf, author of the "Journal Secret." He commanded the unsuccessful Austrian campaign against the Turks in 1737, and was disgraced and imprisoned on his return.

ment to the Prussian interests. His next step was to procure tall recruits for the blue regiment, and finally he promised the King of Prussia, that Austria would secure to him the succession of Juliers and Berg. Thus assailed in all his weak points, Frederic yielded his implicit confidence to the artful envoy, and proved to the Court of Vienna, the skill of its ambassador, by giving, in the compact of Wusterhausen, his assent to the Pragmatic Sanction, 1726.

With the Queen, however, Seckendorf made no way. She had known him before at Hanover, and retained a disagreeable recollection of some transaction, in which he had failed to show her that deference, which her pride demanded as her due. Added to this, she discovered, that his object was to withdraw the King from the English alliance; and when, at table, Seckendorf incautiously let drop some slighting expression with regard to the King of England, she resented it angrily, and, forgetting the usual urbanity which distinguished her manners, made use of some discourteous expression towards him. Seckendorf was not a man either to forget or forgive an insult, even from a Queen. He told her that he would cause any one who entertained such an opinion of him to repent the expression of it, and he kept his promise but too well.

Other similar occurrences confirmed this incipient hostility, and during the whole of his residence at Berlin, which lasted till 1735, Sophia Dorothea and he were at open war. After his recall the King said, "My wife and the whole world are against him; the Prince of Anhalt and my Fritz hate him like the pest, but he is a brave fellow, and loves me."*

Of Grumbkow, too, the efficacy of whose friendship she had more than once experienced, the Queen, by her ill-timed hauteur, once more made an enemy. Indignant that he had leagued himself with Seckendorf, she not only revoked the gift which she had made him of her portrait, but sent to have it wrenched from the panels where he had placed it in his house.

* Förster's "Jugendjahre."

In 1727 died King George I. The Queen's grief at the loss of her father was excessive; and though his support had been but feeble and cold, still he had been more favourable to her views than her brother George II., who looked upon Frederic William with dislike. His Queen, also, Caroline of Anspach, although her opposition was not overt, was, nevertheless, no friend to the Prussian interests. Besides, the failure of Frederic William's expectations with regard to the wills of Sophia Dorothea's father and mother had not left him more amicably disposed either towards herself or her family.*

In the beginning of the year 1728 the King was induced, by the representations of his friends, who by no means fell in with the ascetic views of Francke, to pay a visit to Dresden, there to conclude with King Augustus the Strong of Poland the differences to which the enlistment of some of that Prince's taller subjects had given rise. The crown Prince accompanied the King upon this occasion.

The royal guests were treated with the greatest distinction by the King of Poland, and a round of gaiety and pleasure honoured their visit. Frederic William writes to Seckendorf, "Ich bin in Dessen und springe und tanze, ich bin mehr fatiguiert als wenn ich alle Tage zwei Hirsche todt hetze."†

* Sophia of Zell died Nov. 13, 1726. Seckendorf, in a letter to Prince Eugene, dated Jan. 22, 1727, ascribes the increase of the Queen's influence, which took place just then (and during which the episode of the picture took place) to the expectations which the King founded on the inheritance of her mother, who died rich. But George I. burned the will of his wife, denying her capacity as testatrix. On his own death, which took place soon after, his son George II., in like manner destroyed his testament, on which the King of Prussia had founded hopes of obtaining a considerable legacy to Sophia Dorothea. Frederic William is said on this occasion to have written to his brother-in-law, that he "deserved the galleys."—See Vehse, "Preussischen Hof."

Lord Mahon says that the story of George I. destroying his wife's will "rests only on court gossip, and seems quite at variance with the honesty of purpose and love of justice which distinguished George the First."—See Mahon's Hist. Engl., vol. ii. p. 111.

† "I am here in Dresden, and spring and dance. I am more fatigued than if I hunted down two stags every day."

This visit was a most important, and, in many respects, unfortunate one, for the crown Prince. Dresden was then one of the most licentious Courts of a licentious age. Even Frederic William himself found his virtue beset by strong temptations. He writes again to Seckendorf, "Ist gewiss nit christlich leben hier. Aber Gott ist mein Zeuge dass ich kein plaisir daran gefunden, und noch so rein bin als ich vom Hause hergekommen, und mit Gottes Hülfe beharren werde bis an mein Ende." *

But to the crown Prince, from whom all the avenues of vice had been hitherto so strictly guarded, these temptations were far more dangerous. He was here at once plunged into the very vortex of dissipation and profligacy. He is said to have fallen deeply in love with the beautiful Countess Orselska—a passion which, on his return to the more monotonous life of Berlin and Potsdam, brought on a disposition to deep melancholy; whilst the taste which he had conceived for the pleasures of the gay Saxon Court, led him into courses, whose vicious tendency becoming known to the King, exasperated him still more against his son.

At Dresden, also, Frederic became acquainted with Quanz, the celebrated flute-player, and took from him his first lessons on that instrument. When the King of Poland returned Frederick William's visit a short time afterwards, Quanz was amongst his suite, and was privately engaged by the Queen to continue his lessons to her son, as often as he could obtain leave of absence from Dresden. The study of music was a great solace to Frederic, and he devoted all the time which he could abstract from the duties of parade, &c., to its cultivation. His lessons were received by stealth, either when the King was engaged in hunting excursions, or was absent with his regi-

* "It is certainly not Christian living here, but God is my witness that I have found no pleasure in it, and am still as pure as when I left home, and will, with God's help, remain until my end."

ment ; sometimes he and his young companions would separate, one by one, from the hunting party, to meet at a given spot, and there, surrounded by thick woods, perform the different parts of some musical composition. On other occasions, escaping from the drudgery of the drill, he would fling aside the hated uniform and military queue, and investing himself in a rich dressing-gown and French hair-tie, receive his lesson in his own room. On one of these occasions an alarm of " the King ! the King !" was raised. Quanz concealed himself in the shadow of the wide chimney, whilst Frederic hastily thrust on his uniform ; but the music-books, the brocade dressing gown, and the Parisian hair-tie, did not escape the King's notice and loud reprehension ; and Quanz, in mortal fear of the discovery of his red coat through the gloom, was obliged to maintain his position for the hour, during which Frederic William exhausted himself in vituperations against his son's vile womanish tastes, and in all manner of threats should he persist in them. Yet, despite his father's utmost strictness, the young Prince managed to elude his watchfulness, both in this, and other respects ; and when at night he retired to his chamber, it was only to issue from it, arrayed in the newest French fashions, and bound for the wildest haunts of dissipation afforded by his father's capital. The King, having an inkling of his son's pursuits, thought it best in the ensuing year, 1729, to place him under the surveillance of fresh governors. Messrs. Rochow and Kaiserling were the names of the gentlemen whom he now placed about the crown Prince. Rochow was an upright man, but a bore, affecting the mysterious, to conceal the superiority of his pupil's, to his own intellect. Kaiserling, on the contrary, though equally well principled, was gay, lively and versatile, speaking many different languages with equal facility, and knowing a little on all imaginable subjects, with great depth in none. He united with these qualifications a good-nature, which made him always ready to oblige any one. It is difficult to conceive the reason of the King's choice of this brilliant

personage to be his son's tutor ; nevertheless, so it was, and his society was a great resource to Frederic.*

The Prince had also become intimate with two young men named Keith and Katt. The former was one of the King's pages, a youth of amiable disposition, who had gained Frederic's friendship by sympathizing with him on the harsh treatment of his father. Katt was the son of Colonel Hans Heinrich Katt. He was not naturally of a bad disposition, nevertheless he was by no means a desirable companion for Frederic. In person he was not pleasing, being of low stature, deeply marked with small-pox, with beetling black brows, which nearly met above his eyes. He was fond of parading his sceptical views on religious subjects, views which, with him, as with many other shallow-brained young men of the present day, were not the result of thought, but of the want of it. These ideas he unfortunately soon succeeded in imparting to the crown Prince, as well as in drawing him into yet worse company and wilder debauch, than he had engaged in before, whilst he encouraged him in manifesting opposition to his father's wishes, and neglect of his commands.

In the domestic circle, meantime, things went on from bad to worse. The Queen, surrounded with vexations, was irritable and capricious ; her daughter found it "impossible to please her ;" whilst the King's fits of passion appear at times to have amounted almost to insanity, so great was his exasperation against the "Querpfifer † and poet Fritz," whom he was recommended to marry, lest his excesses should injure his health, and against the Princess Royal, the subject of whose marriage had cost him so much annoyance. Their mother no longer

* Their friendship remained unbroken until Kaiserling's death in 1745. His loss was more severely felt by Frederic than that of any other of his most intimate friends, and he provided carefully, and with much feeling, for the education of the daughter whom his deceased friend had left, expressing his earnest wish that "la pauvre Adelaide" should be worthy of her father. The Marchioness of Baireuth speaks of Kaiserling as "fort honnête homme, mais fort débauché, grand étourdi et bavard, qui faisait le bel esprit et n'était qu'une bibliothèque renversée."

† Fifer.

dared receive these two unfortunate children openly. All sorts of stratagems were had recourse to, to elude the King's eye. On one occasion when the Prince and Princess were with the Queen, the spies set to watch were not sufficiently on the alert ; an alarm was given that the King was at hand. The Prince hastily concealed himself in a niche ; the Princess crept under her mother's bed, on which the King, being tired with hunting, threw himself, and fell asleep. His children meanwhile were obliged to maintain their constrained position until, after what appeared to them an interminable period, he awoke from his nap and departed.

The Queen, too, had now another confidante, even worse selected than the two former ones. This was a Madame Ramen, of whom the Margravine de Baireuth says that she "was a widow, or rather, like the woman of Samaria, she had many husbands." To this person, as usual, the Queen confided all her most important secrets, which were duly sent round by Madame de Ramen to the King, thus adding fuel to the fire of his vexation. Moreover, whilst on a visit to a grand review given by the King of Poland, Frederic William had met the Duke of Saxe Weissenfels, and, to that Prince's great surprise, although the match was in no way a desirable one for the Princess Royal, had offered him his eldest daughter in marriage. When, however, the Duke presented himself in the character of suitor to her daughter, the Queen turned her back upon him. This discourtesy occasioned a violent dispute between her and her husband. At one time an end seemed about to be put to all these disturbances by the Prince of Wales himself, who had determined on seeing, with his own eyes, the much talked of Princess of Prussia. Even before the visit of the King of Poland, the Queen had received false intelligence of an incognito visit projected by her nephew ; and for a long time amongst the strangers who arrived at Berlin, "il n'y avait ni ane ni mulet," whom she did not take for him.* Disappointment

had at length taken the place of expectation, when La Motte arrived from Hanover, and, having demanded a private audience of the Queen, informed her that he was commissioned by the Prince of Wales to ask whether an incognito visit from him would be agreeable to the King and Queen of Prussia; and, on behalf of the Prince also, La Motte entreated her at the same time, to keep the matter a profound secret. Overjoyed at this announcement, the Queen forgot the injunction to secrecy, and communicated the fact to Dubourguaï, the English envoy, saying that she was sure he was sufficiently her friend to participate in her joy. Great was her chagrin when M. Dubourguaï expressed his sincere regret that she should have communicated to him a secret which his duty compelled him to reveal to his master, the King of England, with as little delay as possible. She entreated his forbearance, that he would delay, would concede to her ever so short a respite; but the minister was inflexible. George II. receiving intelligence of his son's intended step, saw himself obliged to recall him to England, whilst La Motte was arrested and imprisoned. The Queen was in the greatest embarrassment; she had informed her husband of La Motte's mission, and he had come from his favourite retreat of Wusterhausen, to Berlin, expressly to receive the Prince of Wales. Fresh irritation and misunderstanding were the results of this *contretemps*, added to which the King, who had drunk hard and hunted hard, in all sorts of weather, was attacked by a violent fit of gout. He was more like a madman than anything else in his fits of frantic irritability. There was no indignity which he did not put upon "that canaille Anglaise," his daughter, and "that coquin de Fritz," his son. Nevertheless, he would neither allow them, nor the Queen to leave his room, in which they were ordered to appear punctually by nine o'clock in the morning. He had long extended his economy in matters of diet to the most wretched parsimony. Persons who had the honour of an invitation to the royal table, generally left it with an unsated appetite. He now carried this to a more

extraordinary extent than ever, and the Margravine of Baireuth gives details which seem almost incredible, of his treatment of herself and her brother, in this, and other respects. Ill though he was, his impatience would not allow him to remain in his bed, and he caused himself to be wheeled about in a chair on rollers, whilst his family, "like mournful captives, followed this triumphant car." One day he dismissed them, exclaiming to the Queen, "Away with you and your cursed children, and leave me alone." The Queen and her children, rejoicing in the holiday thus secured, ordered dinner in her apartments; but scarcely were they seated at table, when the Queen was recalled in haste by the intelligence that her husband was strangling himself. On another occasion, being irritated by a remark of the Princess Frederica (who was now betrothed to the Margrave of Anspach), he threw a plate at his son's head, another at the Princess Royal's, and finally drove the latter out of the room with his crutch.

But we hasten over this and many other such disgusting scenes, as over the frenzied violence of a madman.

The marriage of the Princess Frederica Louisa, which took place in 1729, appears to have made but little break in the course of either the King's or the Queen's ideas; and the outbreak of fresh disturbances between Hanover and Prussia, on account of Frederic William's kidnappers, gave occasion to another explosion of wrath, and even to an order for his troops to assemble for the purpose of revenge. Then followed fresh attempts at reconciliation and renewed negotiations on the part of the Queen; overtures which were but coldly received by England.

Eversmann, the Kammerdiener, too, whom Sophia Dorothea had endeavoured to win over to her side by bribery, because she knew he had the King's ear, betrayed her to Grumbkow, whose pay he also received and whom he better served, and thus the secret of this fresh attempt to carry out her English views, reached the ears of her husband. He immediately sent Borek and Grumbkow to announce to her, that, weary of her intrigues, he had decided

upon marrying his daughter, although certainly not to the Prince of Wales, and that from a remains of kindness for her, he would consent to give her the choice between Schwedt and Weissenfels. The Queen replied that he was the master of his own actions, and could certainly, if he chose, bestow his daughter upon any petty Prince, instead of upon the heir of three crowns; but that for her part, she would never consent to sacrifice her child in such a manner, and that all she could do in the case was, to write to her brother, and press for a decisive answer. She also wrote to the King, entreating him not to push matters further. The next day brought another formal deputation from Frederic William, to repeat the proposals of yesterday, and to add the threat, that, if the Queen would not consent, he would imprison her for life, whilst the Princess Royal should be treated with the utmost severity.

The Queen told Borck upon this occasion that she wished to speak with him in private. She then asked his advice, as a friend, in this emergency. He suggested that a third party should be proposed, in order to gain time, and mentioned the Prince of Baireuth. The Queen begged him to communicate this idea to the King, as if it were a proposition from himself. Meanwhile, she held council with her eldest son and daughter, as to what must be done to avert the threatened evil. It was agreed, that a pressing letter to the Queen of England should be composed by Sophia Dorothea and the Princess Wilhelmina, which should be copied and subscribed by the crown Prince, and that the Queen should then feign illness, in order to gain time for the transmission of this letter and the receipt of the answer.*

* This letter ran as follows :—“Madame ma sœur et tante, Quoique j’ai déjà eu l’honneur d’écrire a votre Majesté, et de vous expliquer la triste situation où je me trouve, aussi que ma sœur, je ne saurais m’imaginer qu’une princesse dont les vertus et le merite forment l’admiration universelle, pût laisser souffrir une sœur qui lui est tendrement attachée, en refusant de souscrire au mariage de ma sœur et du Prince de Galles, qui cependant a été arrêté si solennellement par le traité de Hanovre. J’ai déjà donné ma parole d’honneur de n’épouser jamais que la

The shortest period that could bring a reply from England was three weeks, and in the meanwhile reports did not fail to reach the King that the Queen's illness was only assumed; the delay therefore did but irritate him, and when the letters from England arrived, they were most unsatisfactory. Frederic William now came in person to Berlin, determined to enforce compliance with his will. After a stormy interview with the Queen, he went to the Marchioness of Schwedt, and demanded her consent to the marriage of her son with his daughter; but the aged Marchioness, aware of the violent scenes which had of late taken place in the royal family, asked him whether her Majesty the Queen and the Princess Royal were consenting parties to the proposed contract; he replied that they were not, but that he should soon "bring them to reason." The Marchioness, however, refused to listen to a proposal which would force the Princess, against her will, into an alliance with her son.

On the King's return, he accidentally fell in with the unfortunate Princess Royal, in her mother's apartments, and despite the folding screen, which had been purposely placed so as to cover her retreat, in case she should be thus surprised, a violent storm of blows and abuse saluted her, before she could effect her escape; and Mademoiselle Sonsfeld was obliged to interpose her own person, to prevent worse treatment of this innocent cause of so much vexation to her father.

He then told the Queen that the Marchioness of Schwedt had refused her daughter, and, that she might think herself fortunate, if the Duke of Weissenfels would take her. The Queen would have preferred even Schwedt to this Prince, the "gros Jean Adolphe," as she called him. She therefore replied that she would renounce the idea of an alliance with England,

princesse Amalie, sa fille, je lui réitère encore cette promesse, en cas qu'elle veuille donner son consentement au mariage de ma sœur. Nous sommes tous réduit dans l'état du monde le plus fâcheux, et tout sera perdu si elle balance encore à nous donner une réponse favorable. Je me trouverai alors libre de toutes les promesses que je viens de lui faire, et obligé de suivre les volontés du roi mon père, en prenant telle partie qu'il me proposera," &c. &c.—*Baireuth*, "Mem."

and consent to her daughter's marriage, provided that it was not to the Duke of Saxe Weissenfels. "Where, then, would she seek an alliance?" demanded the King. "With the hereditary Prince of Baireuth," she replied, "who will at least one day be a sovereign Prince, and who is related to our own house." A little mollified by her apparently desisting from the English match, the King in a milder tone gave his consent to this proposal, and retired.

The manifold vexations and constant anxiety of mind suffered by the Queen, now resulted in a violent attack of illness, during which her life was despaired of. Frederic William was absent at the time on a visit to Dresden, and a courier was despatched to recall him. His mind had been, however, so poisoned against his wife, that at first he imagined her malady to be only a feint; but on returning to Berlin, and finding that the physicians entertained but little hope of her recovery, the King, whose emotions were as violent in sorrow as in anger, fell into a state of the bitterest remorse. On being admitted to her bedside, and observing her altered appearance, he gave way to a paroxysm of grief, imploring her pardon, entreating the physicians to use their utmost efforts to restore her, and vowing that if she died, he could not and would not survive her. Upon his becoming in some degree calm, Sophia Dorothea begged him, as perhaps a last request, to be reconciled to her children.

Wholly softened by the influence of grief, he embraced his two elder children, with tears, in her presence. Nevertheless, the dangerous crisis being past, and the Queen's recovery announced as certain, he soon resumed his former harsh treatment of the Prince and Princess, when not in their mother's presence.

The crown Prince especially suffered from the effects of his severity; on one occasion he even struck him repeatedly with his cane, and it was said, that, in an access of fury, he had attempted to strangle him.

The young man, naturally enough, longed for freedom from the galling constraint and perpetual insults, to which he was obliged to submit. His sister relates, that, one night he came to her apartment, dressed as usual on his evening excursions, in the height of the French fashion, and told her gloomily, that he could no longer bear his father's injustice and tyranny, and that he had resolved to have recourse to flight. She remonstrated with him, urgently entreating him to lay aside a plan which would so fatally arouse the fury of the King. He said no more at the time, and appeared to be convinced by her arguments; but he had by no means given up the idea. Irritated to the last degree by the injuries constantly cast upon him, he no longer attempted to conciliate his father, but spoke of his favourite pursuits with open derision, stigmatizing the rough field sports in which he delighted, as oppressive to the peasantry, and, as a pastime, little better than chimney-sweeping; whilst he blamed his harshness to the common soldiery in matters of discipline.

Katt, meantime, was injudicious in the extreme; he was loud in the praise of the Prince, whilst he publicly blamed the conduct of the King towards him; he also most indiscreetly showed a miniature of the Princess, which her brother had lent him to copy. Whilst things were in this state, an entirely new direction seemed, for the moment, to be given to the course of affairs, by the arrival of the English ambassador Hotham, who was empowered to conclude the agreement for the marriage of the Princess Royal with the Prince of Wales, provided, that the King of Prussia, on his side, was ready to agree to that of the crown Prince with the Princess Amelia. To the first part of this proposition Frederic William acceded joyfully, to the latter he gave no answer; but at table that day he announced to the Queen, that the marriage of the Princess Royal with the Prince of Wales was now settled, and drank to the health of the young couple. Hotham preserved a constrained silence on this occasion, but on the King's leaving the table, he again

demanded an audience. His Majesty was evidently annoyed, and replied that he was on his road to Potsdam, and could not wait. On his return from thence, a few days afterwards, he told the Queen that he had resolved to marry his son to the Princess of Brunswick Bevern. Hotham, on being again admitted to an audience, pressed the subject of the marriage of the crown Prince, and added that he was further commissioned to state, that the hostility of Grumbkow to the English interests was so well known, that the King of England considered him to be a personal enemy; that he, Hotham, only awaited the receipt of one or two papers, which he expected to be forwarded to him very shortly, to be in a position, not only to demonstrate the truth of this statement, but also to prove, by means of letters from Grumbkow to Richenbach, the Prussian resident in England, that the former was also acting a treacherous part towards his Prussian Majesty; that the King of England demanded his dismissal as a mark of personal friendship to himself; and that this stipulation being conceded, and the marriage of the Prince Royal with the Princess Amelia being also decided upon, there would be no further delay placed in the way of the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Princess Royal.

The King appeared much struck with the accusation of Grumbkow, and demanded the proofs. He also said that his son was as yet too young to marry. Hotham, however, was firm in maintaining, that the completion of the one match could not take place without that of the other. "Be it so, then," said the King; "I consent, on condition that my son be appointed Stattholder of Hanover, and reside there till my death."

Hotham replied that he would despatch a courier to ascertain his master's will on this head, and also to hasten the despatch of the necessary links in the chain of evidence which he had to produce against Grumbkow.

Of course, intelligence of the storm that was brewing against

him did not fail to reach Grumbkow, through some of the channels which he constantly kept open, and he turned all his energies to employ the respite before proof could arrive, in averting the impending danger. Seckendorf served him most effectually in the matter, by insinuating to the King, that the accusations against him were the result of the Queen's intrigues with England, and that the English policy was, to place the crown Prince upon the throne, and thus, by means of his marriage with an English Princess, to govern Prussia. Nor were suggestions, calculated to touch the King's ruling passion, wanting, in the shape of inuendoes upon "the vain and haughty English daughter-in-law," to supply whose extravagance, the proceeds of the Treasury itself, would prove inadequate.

The delight of the Queen, meantime, was extreme at this apparently close approximation to the attainment of her dearest wishes, and no suspicion of the secondary causes which were thus undermining her now exultant prospects crossed her mind. Hotham had been charged with letters from the Prince of Wales couched in the most lover-like terms. She seemed on the point of a complete triumph over her old enemies, Grumbkow and Seckendorf, whom, in her premature self-gratulation, she treated with the most cutting contempt. The recent birth of her youngest child, the Prince Augustus Ferdinand, too, had attracted much of her husband's former tenderness towards her, and all "went merry as a marriage bell" to her buoyant anticipations.

In due time Hotham received the necessary papers from England, and waited upon the King, fully prepared to confirm his former statements, and to announce the willingness of George II. to accede to the proposal with regard to the Statthaltership of Hanover.

But the wind now set from another quarter. Frederic William, instead of reading the proofs of Grumbkow's delinquency, flung them down angrily, and said that he would receive laws from nobody as to the selection of his servants; and, en-

tirely forgetting his royal dignity, in one of those explosions of ungoverned anger to which his own dependents were constantly subjected, he, it is said, even raised his foot, as if to kick the ambassador of England, and then rushed furiously from the room.

Justly indignant at this gross insult, Hotham made instant preparations for quitting the country.

On hearing of this catastrophe, the ambassadors of Holland and Denmark instantly besought an audience of the King, and succeeded, by their representations, in making him regret the violence to which he had given way, and in inducing him even to go the length of saying that he would consent to what was required of him. But Hotham was not to be appeased, and proceeded in his hasty arrangements for departure.

The Queen, thus cast down from her pinnacle of exultation to a worse position than ever, caused the crown Prince to write to Hotham, and entreat him to reflect that his own happiness and that of his sister, as well as the harmony of the two houses of England and Prussia, now depended upon him, and to beg him to yield to the King's wish for a reconciliation. Hotham, however, replied, that the majesty of England had been insulted in his person, and that he saw himself compelled, although with the deepest regret, to break off the negotiations and leave the Court. Before doing so he transmitted the intercepted letters, which formed the proof of Grumbkow's treachery, to the Queen.

After this occurrence, Prince Frederic, harassed by fresh instances of harshness from his father, began now more seriously to revolve the project of flight; and it was not very long before he put it in execution.

The beginning of the year 1730 had been occupied by the betrothal of the third Princess, Philippina Charlotte, to the Prince of Brunswick Bevern, and the festivities consequent upon such an event. On the 15th of July of the same year Frederic William, accompanied by the crown Prince, set off on a tour through his dominions, purposing to make various visits

to neighbouring Princes by the way. The first of these visits was paid to his daughter, the Margravine of Anspach. It was from hence that Prince Frederic had intended to effect his escape; but his brother-in-law, fearful of incurring the King's resentment himself, declined to furnish the necessary horses. During their stay at Anspach, Frederic William further embittered his son's mind, by openly taunting him with poltroonery that he had not run away, saying that, in his own case, had his father treated him with a tithe of the same severity he should have done so a "thousand times."

It is useless to prolong the painful story. Suffice it, that after some further journeying to Augsburg and various other places, the Prince decided on attempting his escape from a village called Neufurth, or Steinfurth, near Sinzheim, where the King had put up for the night, and where he had preferred the clean straw of some barns to the narrow accommodations of the villagers' houses.

Rochow and Kummersbach had been appointed to sleep in the same part of one of these buildings as that occupied by the Prince. On Kummersbach's awaking he missed the Prince, and at once roused Rochow, and they went together in search of him. They found him in the market-place leaning against a carriage, waiting for the horses which he had sent Keith's brother (one of the pages) to procure. They insisted upon his returning with them; the Prince remonstrated angrily; but it was useless to resist, and he submitted with sullen resignation. In the meantime a letter which he had written to Katt, directing him whither to bend his flight, had been by mistake forwarded to another officer of the same name, who deemed it his duty to despatch it to the King. This unfortunate letter reached the King at Frankfort, whither the journey had now been continued. He ordered the Prince into the yacht which was to convey them to Wesel, and nursed his wrath in silence.

The next day, on going on board the yacht, his fury got the better of him at the sight of his offending son; he seized him

by the throat, and struck him so violent a blow with the handle of his stick, that the Prince's face was covered with blood, and he is said to have exclaimed, "Never before did the face of a Brandenburg submit to such disgrace."

From Frankfort, they continued this wretched journey to Bonn, where the King was to stop to visit the Elector of Cologne. Fearing another attempt at escape, he sent the Prince on to Wesel: here the unfortunate young man again made an effort to obtain his freedom, by means of a rope-ladder which had been furnished to him, but the attempt was rendered abortive by the vigilance of the sentinel.

Once again at Wesel, Prince Frederic was brought before his irritated father, who called him an "infamous deserter;" and asked him how he dared to think of escape. "Because," replied the Prince, "you have treated me like a slave. I have only done that which you yourself have said, that in my place you would have done a thousand times."

This speech so exasperated the King, that he seized his sword and would have slain his son had not General Mosel* caught his arm and withheld him. During the remainder of the homeward journey, the Prince submitted to his fate with calmness.†

In the intervening time, at Berlin, the usual spiritual warning of impending misfortune to the house of Brandenburg, is said to have announced the approach of evil tidings to the Queen, whilst she was at her toilette, on the eve of the day on which the King made the above-mentioned frantic attempt on the life of his son. This ghostly admonition consisted of loud and terrible noises in the rich porcelain cabinet adjoining the Queen's bed-room. The cabinet was vainly investigated to discover the cause of the disturbance, which was now loudly repeated, with the addition of groans and cries of pain, in the

* The Commandant of Wesel.

† For details of this journey see Förster's "*Jugendjahre Friedrich des Grossen*," and Preuss's "*Jugendjahre*," first vol. of the "*Lebens Geschichte*."

gallery communicating with the King's apartments. The ladies in attendance, being by far too terrified to do anything but cling together, in helpless alarm, the Queen herself took a light in order to ascertain the cause of these extraordinary sounds; but she found the gallery perfectly empty, whilst the fastened doors at the further end were guarded by a soldier, now pale and trembling with affright.

On the 15th of August, the same courier that brought the order for the arrest of Katt (who with the most extraordinary foolhardiness was waiting for a saddle with conveniences for concealing money and jewels) brought also a note from the King to Madame de Kamecke, begging her to inform the Queen of the attempted desertion, and the arrest of "Fritz."*

On receiving this terrible news, the unhappy mother, whom it reached during an evening assembly, dismissed the company with a face as pale as death, and retired with the Princess Royal to give vent to her grief and terror, and to form the most direful conjectures as to the probable issue of the event.

The Prince's portefeuille, containing an immense number of letters from his mother and sister, was forwarded to the Queen by a friendly hand after Katt's arrest; the difficulty as to the breaking of his arms, with which it had been sealed, being overcome by a similar seal having been accidentally found by a trusty domestic, the two ladies employed the few days which intervened before the King's return, in burning these letters and hastily fabricating fresh ones on indifferent matters to supply their place, but, says the Margravine, "as there were near fifteen hundred of the originals, although we worked very hard, not more than six hundred or seven hundred could be completed in the time;" so that the portefeuille still looked comparatively empty, and the Queen hastily filled it up with

* The Margravine of Baireuth and Baron Pöllnitz give different versions of this intimation. The former says it was sent direct to the Queen, harshly announcing the arrest of the "coquin Fritz." The latter, that it was addressed to Madame de Kamecke, begging her to break the intelligence gently to the Queen.

trinkets, and "toute sorte de nippes." This was, eventually, the cause of the discovery of the artifice, as when the portefeuille was opened in the presence of the Prince, he did not recognise these interpolated articles, and Grumbkow, suspecting the trick which had been played, exclaimed, with an insolence that no other subject would have dared to be guilty of, "These cursed women have outwitted us!"*

On the King's return, he entered the Queen's apartment with the stern announcement, "Your son is dead." "What!" shrieked the unhappy Queen, "have you murdered your son?" "He was not my son," retorted the King, "he was only a miserable deserter." On leaving the Queen he encountered his eldest daughter, and the whole violence of his insane fury was turned upon the poor Princess, whom he beat, and would perhaps have murdered in the blind frenzy of the moment, had she not been rescued, half insensible, by the interference of her brothers and sisters and the ladies present. The mother, half distracted, rushed wildly about the room, shrieking and wringing her hands, exclaiming "Mon Dieu, mon fils! mon Dieu, mon fils!" The sight of the unfortunate Katt, who was led across the court, now drew off the King's attention to a fresh victim, and he left the fainting Princess and her distracted mother, to be consoled by their attendants, with the assurance that the Prince was at least still alive.

There was another scene of brutal violence with poor Katt, who in his adversity showed that his character possessed a fund of manly fortitude, high feeling and resignation, which had not been called forth by his gay, thoughtless life at the French Ambassador's,† and about the Court. He was shortly afterwards tried by court-martial, and condemned to be beheaded; this sentence was executed, despite the touching appeal made by his father to Frederic William.

All the other parties who could be supposed to have had any complicity in the Prince's design were treated with different mea-

* See Preuss, and Förster.

† Rothenburg, whose house he frequented.

tures of severity. Duhan was banished to Wesel, and Rochow and Kaiserling degraded in military standing. The harshest instance of severity, and at the same time of injustice, in these awards, was the punishment of an unfortunate girl, named Doris Ritter, the daughter of a respectable citizen, against whom no heavier crime could be alleged, than, that she having a taste for music, the Prince used sometimes to accompany her on his flute. She was condemned to be publicly whipped through the streets of Berlin.*

In the meantime the crown Prince was closely guarded at Mittenwalde, about eight miles from Berlin. Hence, after submitting to an interrogation from Messrs. Grumbkow and Derschau, he was conveyed to the fortress of Küstrin; here he was strictly guarded, and denied at first both bed and candle; his expenses were limited to four Groschen† a day, and his jailors were forbidden to speak to him. The inhuman barbarity which caused his unfortunate friend, Katt, to be executed on a scaffold, raised to the level of the purposely-enlarged windows of his room, whilst he was obliged to look on, until a fainting fit mercifully relieved him from the frightful spectacle, is a fact of too well known, and too painful a nature, for it to be necessary to detail it here. After some time the severity of his imprisonment was slightly relaxed, and although books, and all other means of employment and recreation, save the visits of the clergyman Müller, were still forbidden, yet friends were found, who supplied the captive with books and writing materials; who, when the stipulated tallow-candle was extinguished at eight o'clock, returned with two lighted

* This unhappy victim of Frederic William's tyrannical violence, afterwards led an obscure life as the wife of a person who let hack-carriages, who was afterwards promoted in Frederic the Great's reign to be public commissioner of fiacres (then a new office in Berlin). She lived in the same house with Formey, the French preacher, author of the "*Mémoires d'un Citoyen*;" but both he and Thiébault express their uncertainty, as to whether she even had a pension allowed her by Frederic, as a token of his sense of the disgrace and misery which she had undergone on his account.

† About 4 $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

wax ones, and even supplied the knives and forks, and other table utensils, which were strictly forbidden by the King, lest the unhappy young man should turn them against his own life.

The sacrifice of poor Katt was not enough to appease the savage anger of the King ; had it not been for the intrepidity of two of the Generals* who composed the court-martial, to which was deputed the trial of the crown Prince (October 25), and for the remonstrances of the allied foreign Courts,† to all of which Frederic William had sent information of his son's arrest, —the greatest King to whom Prussia has given birth, would have ended his life prematurely, like a common military deserter, a victim to the frenzied passion of his own father ; and to repeat a somewhat hacknied remark, the history of Prussia would have thus afforded an unhappy analogy to those of Russia, Spain, Este and India ; whilst the memory of the King of a civilized European country, in the eighteenth century, must have ranked with those of Brutus and Manlius, who, in the barbarous times of heathen antiquity, made a stern virtue of pouring a libation of their children's blood to the Moloch of military discipline.

Grumbkow now undertook the task of mediator ; possibly the adroit courtier saw here a chance of making himself indispensable to both parties ; possibly the wretched results of the intrigues, in which he had himself taken so large a share, aroused a better feeling in the heart of the man. At all events, he besought the King's permission to visit the prisoner, upon whom the eyes of the nation were now turned with loving sympathy. The King, who had now had time for reflection, and who, as we have so often had occasion to remark, was rather carried away by his uncontrollable fury, than naturally cruel, not unwillingly accorded him this permission. Grumbkow's next step was, (unknown to the King) to wait upon the Queen,‡ who he was well aware, had but too great reason to look

* Förster.

† Pöllnitz.

‡ Ibid.

upon him with dislike, and whose favour he wished to regain. Her surprise was great at this visit of her ancient enemy, and in the delight with which she listened to the subject of his mission, she forgot all her suspicions and ill-will, and told him, that she freely forgave the past, in consideration of the present. Charged, thus, with tender messages from the mother, and the bearer of a gleam of hope for pardon from the irritated father, Grumbkow set off for Küstrin, where he hoped to be a welcome visitor to the imprisoned Prince.

With all sorts of expressions of sympathy and offers of service, he advised him to write a submissive letter to the King. Adversity, amongst many other bitter lessons, had taught Frederic the policy of, at least, seeming to believe in proffered friendship. He acted, therefore, upon Grumbkow's advice, and addressed a letter, couched in very humble terms, to the King; and henceforth we find Grumbkow the medium, through whom was brought about the gradual reconciliation between father and son.

The King, upon the receipt of this letter, despatched a deputation to the crown Prince, to notify to him, that he was at liberty to leave the fortress, though not the town of Küstrin, on condition of an oath, to be first administered to him, of strict obedience to his father's will in all things. The deputation was further charged to state, that, for the useful employment of his time by attention to civil affairs, he was to take his place as junior counsellor in the Domänen-Kammer of the town. Frederic took the required oath, and expressed his willingness to enter upon the employment assigned him, but begged to be allowed once more to wear his sword. This perhaps, went as far as anything else to restore him to his father's good opinion. "Does Fritz wish to be a soldier?" said he; "that is well at least."

Henceforward, the life of the crown Prince at Küstrin, was lightened of its chief hardships, and had even its own peculiar pleasures; for though strictly forbidden either to read, or write

anything, but what related to the business of the Domain-Chamber, or to speak French, still he had the companionship of his flute, whilst the castle of Tamsel, at a short distance from Küstrin, where resided the family of Von Wrech, afforded him, in the society of its younger members, a pleasant resource against the *ennui* attendant upon too great solitude. Money, too, was here forthcoming, although the family of Von Wrech was numerous and not over rich; and it is said, that one of the few female attachments which Frederic ever formed, attracted him principally to this place.

Meantime, the Princess Royal fared but little better than her brother. She was confined to her own apartment, denied the consolation of seeing her mother, and fed upon "ragouts de vieux os, remplis de cheveux et de saloperies," and that so sparingly, that the inhabitants of the French colony at Berlin, upon her position becoming known, used to send her provisions privately.

The propositions also with regard to Schwedt and Weissenfels, were now, from time to time, renewed; letters on this subject were conveyed between the Queen and the Princess in various ways; at one time in a cheese, at another by a trustworthy messenger. The Queen still urged her daughter not to consent to anything, and even to make a vow "by her eternal salvation," to marry no one but the Prince of Wales.

We will not stay to tell of the scenes, in which the King threatened to strike his wife, to cause Mademoiselle Sonsfeld to be publicly whipped, &c., &c.; but we pass on to the deputation, which, once more, formally offered the Princess her choice between the Margrave of Schwedt, the Duke of Weissenfels, and the Prince of Baireuth. Wearied out with the hateful contest, in which the subject of her marriage had so long involved her, she determined, despite the Queen's adjurations to firmness, to accept the Prince of Baireuth, whom she had not seen, in preference to the two others with whom she was acquainted; but she made it the express condition of her con-

sent, that her father, on his side, should agree to the liberation of her brother. On the receipt of the letter in which the Princess informed her mother of the step she had taken, the Queen wrote back a hasty and intemperate reply, threatening the Princess, that "she would never forgive her," that "she considered her a most cruel enemy," that "she disowned her," &c., &c. On the interview which ensued between the mother and daughter, the latter's long-taxed feelings overcame her, and she fainted. But Sophia Dorothea, with a hardness which those who had offended her, frequently experienced, was little touched by her daughter's situation, and bitterly upbraided her, on her recovery, with the cowardice which had led her to accede to her father's wishes. Ramen, however, came to the aid of the Princess, by representing to the Queen, that the King would be very angry, did he hear of her conduct; and then, as she greatly dreaded her husband's violence, she consented to moderate her tone. But, from this time, the Princess Royal experienced a great degree of coldness, and at times, even of unkindness, in her mother's demeanour towards her.

The King, on the contrary, overwhelmed his daughter with caresses, for this proof of her obedience, and the preparations for the wedding were hurried on. Even yet, strange to say, the Queen's favourite project of the English marriage, seemed to her not utterly hopeless; and when she was misinformed, that the whole affair was but a feint, on the part of the King, she readily believed it. Great, therefore, was her consternation, when the Prince of Baireuth actually arrived, and most ungracious the reception she accorded him. The King was incensed at her thus tacitly continuing her opposition. "*Le diable, m'emporte ! Je saurai mettre fin a vos tracasseries,*" said he. The Princess, on the other hand, seems to have been better satisfied with the appearance and manners of her future bridegroom. She dared not, however, accord him even a glance, in the presence of the Queen, who had strictly forbidden her to speak to her betrothed, and had ordered her to slight him as much as possible. This,

however, she would not do, and, no doubt, she managed to make it sufficiently apparent to him, that she was not of the same opinion as her mother, with regard to him. The Prince, seeing that the Queen was thus averse to receive him as a son-in-law, demanded an audience of her, and, in a modest and manly way, assured her, that, however highly honoured he might feel himself to be, by the King's selection of him for a son-in-law (and that he had been also told it was with her sanction), yet, that he would never so far presume upon the claim thus given him, as to persist in his suit, contrary to the wishes of herself and the Princess. The Queen, who was by no means wanting in appreciation of honourable feeling, was struck by the frank manner in which this appeal was made; she even allowed that he was "spirituel."

On the evening of the betrothal, the King embraced his daughter with tears, which continued to flow all the evening; whilst the Queen was cold and constrained; each giving way, as usual, to the feeling of the moment.

And what, on the morrow, were the sensations of all parties when Grumbkow presented the despatches from England (which he feigned to have but just received, although, in reality, he had withheld them till after the betrothal),* announcing that George II. was willing to consent to the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Princess Royal of Prussia, without insisting, at that time, on the double marriage!

The Queen, in her excitement and delight, saw no obstacle to the fulfilment of her wishes. The King, on the contrary, although, in fact, he had the English marriage almost as much at heart as the Queen, conceived himself bound, in honour, to complete the engagement with the Prince of Baireuth; and the commands of honour were, to Frederic William, sacred obligations; whilst the Princess, whose character was fast developing, under the trials to which she had been subjected, was equally determined not to secede from her engagement to a man to

* Pöllnitz.

whom she was not indifferent, and beside whom she looked for, at least, a haven of refuge from the storms, which the subject of her marriage had roused to rage around her. When the Queen, however, discovered her husband's intentions, she spared no effort to disgust the Prince of Baireuth. She once more forbade her daughter to speak to him ; she left the room in displeasure when he ventured on some little, almost accidental, piece of gallantry with his betrothed. She endeavoured to turn him into ridicule ; but here she was foiled at her own weapons. She asked him, in derision, did he understand music, painting, history, geography, &c. "Yes," answered he, in order to put a stop to this catalogue of the accomplishments required to fit him for her daughter, "yes ; and I know the creed and the catechism, too !" She made all sorts of delays in the preparation of the trousseau ; she was absolutely ill with vexation ; but still the inevitable day approached.

The King, meantime, showed his sense of the sacrifice he had made, in keeping his engagement, in a way but little more satisfactory to the poor Prince of Baireuth, who was dubbed "milk-sop" and "dandy," because he did not drink enough, nor smoke enough, nor hunt enough, to satisfy his august father-in-law's ideas of manliness and thorough-breeding ; and if he did not improve in the first respect, it was from no fault of the King's that he was not intoxicated every night of his stay at Berlin. The time which yet intervened before the marriage, was spent at Wusterhausen, one of the King's favourite summer residences, which, for the benefit of my readers, I will describe. Frederic William had raised, at some cost of labour, a barren hill of sand, which hid the mansion from view until the summit was gained. The building was not spacious, and was surrounded by a moat of stagnant water, generally anything rather than either fragrant, or wholesome. The only entrance to the courtyard of this "enchanted palace" * was through a wing at each end, the gates of which were respectively guarded by two white

* Baireuth.

eagles, two black ones, and two bears, savage brutes, which tried to fly at every one who approached, and which were the terror of the Court. In this congenial abode, the King passed his time much to his liking, in hunting and other such amusements. The dinner of the royal family was taken, in all weathers, under a tent, pitched beneath a great lime tree in the garden, where the guests sometimes sat above their ankles in water, and where, moreover, the fare was so sparingly provided, that those who could get anything to eat, were obliged to content themselves with a very frugal meal, while those who could not, had to fast. After this sumptuous repast, the King took his seat in an arm-chair, on the terrace; and there, with his children seated, or crouching on the ground around him, in the full blaze of the sun, it was his pleasure to take a siesta.

The Princesses, when relieved from the duty of guarding their father's slumbers, were under orders to attend the Queen at her favourite game of Toccadille, at which we are assured she sometimes played from morning till night.*

Under these somewhat peculiar domestic arrangements, it is perhaps not surprising, that the Princess Royal, who, meantime, was reproached by the Queen and taunted by her sisters, should have rather wished to experiment upon an establishment of her own, even though it were but a small one. The family from which the Prince of Baireuth was descended, was a younger branch of that house, whose progenitor had sold his right of inheritance to Frederic I.; but, upon the estate lapsing to the Prince's father, in default of a male heir to the elder branch, Frederic William, finding that the money had not been paid, and that there were legal objections to the transfer of the Baireuth property, with that sense of justice which always distinguished his actions on such occasions, ceded his claims without contest.

The day of the marriage, Nov. 20, 1731, at last arrived. The important affair of the bride's toilette occupied the hands of all the Court ladies, and the Queen herself undertook to dress her

* See "Mém." Baireuth.

hair ; but being no adept in the art of arranging the formidable fortifications of curls, powder and pomatum, which were then worn upon the head, she was obliged to give it up to the ladies of the bed-chamber. Then she was not satisfied with the effect ; as fast as one side was done, she disarranged it. In fact, she was hoping against hope, that an English courier might yet arrive, in time to stop the fatal ceremony, which she was thus striving to defer to the utmost limit of time. But it was all in vain. The wedding took place. The King succeeded very tolerably in his effort to intoxicate the bridegroom, and performed the further paternal duty, of making the bride, when undressed, kneel down on the floor to repeat the creed and the Lord's Prayer aloud. Still there had been no sign of Frederic William's readiness to fulfil the promise which his daughter had required of him as the condition of her obedience—no mention was made of the return of the crown Prince from his banishment ; when on the night of the 23rd, at a grand state ball, in which seven hundred couples danced, a young man, simply dressed in gray, was observed to stand for a length of time behind the Queen's chair, as she was engaged at cards. She did not observe the stranger, until he stooped and kissed her hand, and then to her delight she recognised her son. The meeting was a very touching one, although the recollection of the sacrifice at which his liberation had been procured, considerably damped the Queen's pleasure.

The Margravine of Baireuth, as we must now call the Princess Wilhelmina, remarks, that her brother had grown colder and more constrained in manner ; that he was stouter, and not so handsome : certainly the trials which he had endured, were not of a kind to open his heart, or add to the liveliness of his disposition ; nor was the life of Küstrin calculated to develope his muscular powers, or improve his personal appearance. He again returned to Küstrin for a short period, after his sister's marriage, until his appointment to a regiment which was posted at Ruppın, rendered his presence there necessary. At Ruppın

he sedulously devoted himself to those military duties, which, he knew, could alone entirely procure him his father's approbation; he endeavoured also to procure tall recruits, and though he thus incurred debt and difficulty, yet he succeeded in his object; and if he still studied and played the flute, he was wise enough to do it in private. From this time until his father's death, no serious quarrels took place between them. After the crown Prince's marriage, in 1733, especially, his father frequently testified his affection and regard for his heir.

The Margravine of Baireuth, who had done so much to secure him this tranquillity, and whose joyful caresses, for some unaccountable reason, he had received so coldly on the night of his return to Berlin, could not fail to be wounded by his apparent want of cordiality, and a coolness, trifling indeed, but yet apparent, seems to have subsisted between the brother and sister for some time; but this estrangement afterwards wore away, and they were once more on affectionate and intimate terms.*

Though this Princess and her husband remained for a considerable length of time at Berlin after their marriage, as the latter was detained by military duties, yet the Queen could not sufficiently overcome her chagrin at the repeated failure of her plans to treat her daughter with the same affection as formerly; neither could the King conquer his growing parsimony enough to give her more than a paltry sum as a dowry, which she found miserably inadequate to her expenditure.

The marriage of the crown Prince with the Princess of Brunswick Bevern took place in June, 1733, and was immediately followed by that of the Princess Philippina Charlotte, with Prince Charles of Brunswick Bevern, brother of Elizabeth Christina, the new crown Princess. These marriages could not fail to be exceedingly displeasing to the Queen, the more so,

* He did not approve of his sister's marriage to a prince of so insignificant a house; he said, when Hille, the kammer-director of Küstrin, informed him of the match which was about to take place, "*Voilà ma sœur fiancée à quelque gredin, et malheureuse pour toute sa vie.*"

that, by her instigation, a fresh proposition had been made on the part of England, despite the existence of their respective engagements, for the marriage of the crown Prince with the Princess Amelia of England; for that of his sister Charlotte with the Prince of Wales; and for that of Prince Charles of Brunswick with the Princess Ann of England. This proposal, however, like that which had arrived too late to stop the betrothal of the Princess Royal, failed by reason of Frederic William's strict adherence to his pledged word.

During the next year the King's attention was much occupied by the war for the succession of Poland. Augustus the Strong died in 1733, and Stanislaus Leckinski was re-elected to the throne by one part of the nation, whilst the other declared for Augustus II. Frederic William was far from continuing to the son of the late King of Poland the friendship which he had testified towards his boon companion, Augustus the Strong; but although personally friendly towards Stanislaus, when the latter's son-in-law, Louis XV., threatened to make war upon Austria on his behalf, the King of Prussia held himself prepared to support his imperial ally; consequently, he was deeply interested in the question whether France and Austria would ultimately have recourse to arms or not.

Moreover, he considered it to be the duty of every German Prince to combine to keep the "French scoundrels," his prime aversion, and other "foreign dogs," off German ground. His boast was, "I am no Frenchman; I am true German." When, therefore, hostilities seemed to be impending, he warmly expressed his readiness to support the Emperor, provided that all were done "Reichs-constitutions-messig." "Dann," said he, "ohne raisonniren, drup! drup! mit die grösste Plesir von der Welt." * And again, "The Emperor will always find me a faithful ally; he may reckon on 50,000 men."

The Queen was less than ever inclined to the Austrian interests, and looked upon her husband's inclination to take an

* Letter to Seckendorf, 1729.

active part in the war with displeasure. Besides, she, justly enough, distrusted the sincerity of Austria, and openly expressed her opinions on the subject; as once, when the King alluded to his devotion to Austria, she exclaimed, "I shall live to make you, who are so incredulous, believe, and prove to you how you are deceived."* Her disapprobation also sometimes found vent in contemptuous expressions with regard to her husband's generalship and military genius, for which she does not appear to have entertained much respect. On one occasion, during Prince Eugene's visit to Berlin, in 1727, the King expressed his wish that a war might take place; whereupon she exclaimed scornfully, "You! you wish for war?" And at another time, when he spoke somewhat disparagingly of the English commanders, she retorted, "No doubt they must wish to give *you* the command of their army."

But Frederic William's zeal in behalf of Austria was considerably slackened by the procrastination of that Power in guaranteeing to him the ultimate succession of Juliers and Berg. A promise of this had drawn him, in 1726, into the compact of Wusterhausen, by which he gave his assent to the Pragmatic Sanction; and Seckendorf had managed to keep him in good-humour with Austria ever since. Nevertheless, as time wore on, Frederic William grew impatient, and sometimes uttered his complaints so loudly, that the Austrian envoy was obliged to shut his ears absolutely, in order not to take offence on behalf of his Court.

When the war actually commenced, Frederic William therefore sent only 10,000 men as his contingent, instead of 50,000, which he had originally purposed to despatch to the aid of the Emperor. Accompanied by the crown Prince, he, however, himself visited the imperial camp during that unsuccessful campaign on the Rhine, in which the veteran Prince Eugene found, that age had dimmed the quickness of his eye and the readiness of his resource; whilst his friends and

* See Vehse.

admirers were forced to confess that the field of battle was no longer the place for the aged man that had, in him, outlived the warrior.

Frederic William's health had now been long declining. Shortly after the marriage of the crown Prince he had been seized, whilst indulging, surrounded by his family, in his usual after-dinner sleep, with a sort of fit, which had greatly terrified the Queen and all present. Repeated attacks of gout also assailed him. Whilst with the army on the Rhine, he was seized by a violent fit of this malady. An incision, which had been necessary during the attack of 1730, opened afresh, and was injudiciously healed by the surgeon who attended him. From this time the King had few remissions of suffering. He returned, as soon as possible, to Potsdam and to the careful nursing of his wife, who never left him during his frequent illnesses; but his indisposition had increased fearfully during the journey, so that on his arrival he was in a deplorable state, and, for some time, was considered in extreme danger. However, the natural strength of his constitution once more rallied, and he recovered, at least in some degree. It was his custom during these attacks of gout to paint, or rather to daub, for his paintings show but little skill in execution or design.* Some of

* The "Karakterzüge" relate, amongst other anecdotes of Frederic William in his character of artist, that one day (when in his usual health) he asked the castellan, who had a good deal of dry humour, his opinion of a hunting piece he had just completed. "It is excellent, your Majesty," he replied; "quite in the style of the celebrated Dutch painter Bas Claas, who used to letter the figures, and write underneath, "A is the hound, B is the stag." The King jumped up to chastise him, but the castellan ran so fast round a great table that his master's anger had time to evaporate in the heat of the chase.

Another anecdote relates that the King once obliged a picture-dealer to take one of his pictures at the sum of 100 Thalers, which he, wishing to please the King, had stated to be its value. But Frederic William, in bargains of this sort, which delighted him excessively, was sometimes outwitted. On this occasion the dealer hung the picture outside his shop, inscribed, "For sale; painted by H. M. the King of Prussia." Frederic William did not approve of this treatment of his work, and sent to reclaim it at the sum for which he had sold it. "Nay," said the dealer, "a man must live: his Majesty must give me 150 Thalers as the price."

these performances have been preserved, and bear the inscription, "Fredericus Wilhelmus in tormentis pinxit," written with his own hand.

Sometimes he used to assemble his friends round his bed, to hold the *tabagie* in his room; at others he amused himself in making boxes or other carpenter's work, for the accomplishment of which, he had a table adjusted to fit across his bed; and the sound of his hammer, which might be heard night and day when he was very ill, informed the inhabitants of the neighbouring streets of the state of their sovereign's health. Yet amidst his severest sufferings Frederic William never forgot the business of the State, nor omitted to dedicate a certain portion of time every day to its accomplishment.

He about this time experienced several losses and changes amongst his ancient friends. Between him and Anhalt there had for some time been a degree of coldness. Seckendorf was recalled to his Court, or rather caused himself to be recalled, for the King's recruiters had committed some depredations on the Austrian territories, and Seckendorf's remonstrances upon the subject were not attended to; he, consequently, in 1735, applied for his recall. He was afterwards employed by the Emperor to take the command of the expedition against the Turks, on account of the unsuccessful issue of which he was arrested on his return to Vienna. He was succeeded at Berlin by Prince Lichtenstein, a man of less ability, and one, moreover, who did not understand Frederic William. The latter never ceased during the still-pending negotiations as to the succession of Juliers and Berg to regret his old friend, and to sigh for his return. "Austria," he said, "is tired of me; she has withdrawn Seckendorf, in whom I had confidence, and who understood me."*

Grumbkow, too, was no longer in such high favour as of yore; a suspicion of his fidelity had been aroused in the King's mind by various circumstances. The health of this minister,

* Seckendorf's "Journal Secret."

like that of his master, had succumbed to the then prevalent habit of deep drinking. Shortly before the death of Augustus the Strong, Grumbkow had been sent on a mission to him at Crossen; and the time which they spent together there was honoured by such plentiful libations, that neither the King of Poland, nor the Prussian Minister ever entirely recovered the effects of the debauch. On the night of the death of Augustus, his apparition is said to have been beheld by Grumbkow, who was in bed at the time, but, as he always declared, wide awake.

Reports of his having received bribes from La Chétardie, the French Minister, are said to have reached Frederic William; however that may be, on the news of the death of Grumbkow reaching him, in 1739, he said, "If he had lived ten days longer, I should have arrested him;" he also seemed highly dissatisfied by an examination of his late favourite's papers.

The continual series of family misunderstandings at Court has hitherto prevented my adverting to the influence, which the reign of such a sovereign as Frederic William, necessarily exercised over the newly-germinating seeds of literature and science at Berlin. The latter part of the reign of Frederic I. had been unfavourable to the development of those then rare and foreign plants, from the absence of any person of rank of sufficient mental cultivation to appreciate their value. But when Frederic William came to the throne, it was with the express intention of discouraging all such vile waste of time, as he considered literary and scientific pursuits to be. The great Leibnitz himself he pronounced to be an "unprofitable, foolish old fellow, of no use even as a sentinel;" and on the philosopher's death, in derision of the Academy of Sciences, he appointed his unhappy fool and jester, Gundling, to occupy his place as president. He is said only once during his reign to have had recourse to the Academy on any scientific question, and that was upon the cause of the effervescence of champagne. The members of the Society, owing him a grudge for the neglect with which they had been treated, demanded fifteen dozen of

the best champagne to make their experiments upon; but Frederic William replied, that, sooner than let them drink his good wine, he would remain in ignorance of the cause of its effervescence all his life. Probably the department of Medicine alone preserved the Academy in existence; the King required skilful physicians for his beloved blue children, and consequently allowed that this branch of the Institution was useful.

Early in his reign he had established a college of his own of a very different kind; this was the famous "Tabaks Collegium," Smoking College, or "Tabagie," in which he and his officers, and certain of his favourites, used to assemble every evening, and frequently remain till late into the night, engaged in smoking and drinking beer. The Tabagie was furnished with a long table, surrounded by wooden seats; at one end was a large wooden chair of honour, surmounted by hares' ears, which was occupied by the King's fool. During the visit paid by Stanislaus Leckinski to Frederic William, in 1736, he constantly formed one of these parties, which began at seven in the evening, and frequently did not terminate till two, or three o'clock in the morning. The King of Prussia and the ex-King of Poland used to emulate each other in smoke upon these occasions, each of them exhausting from thirty to thirty-two pipes in the course of one session. Seckendorf, of course, formed one of these assemblies, and he writes to Prince Eugene, that he has applied himself especially, to gain those officers who form the smoking collegiate, because they have, from constant association, most influence over the King.* The unhappy jester, Gundling, who has been mentioned, was in fact a person of considerable talent, although evidently of weak mind; he had at first been Professor in the Military Academy formed by Frederic William on his accession. But the King and his officers found that, after a time, they became weary of each other's conversation: they therefore came to the conclusion, that it might be better to have a person of some information, who, when their own topics of

* See Vehse.

conversation waxed threadbare, should furnish them with new ideas. Gundling, then, was chosen to supply the "plentiful lack of wit" of the whole party, and to furnish sport for the Philistines besides, for they considered "all learned persons to be fools," and a fool was allowedly a fair subject for their jokes. They forced the poor man to drink until it became an incurable habit; and when intoxicated, they exercised the most barbarous practical jokes upon him; sometimes they would wall up his door and leave him to grope for it the whole night: sometimes they would put young bears (of which several, with their claws cut, always ran loose at Wusterhausen), into his bed; once he was nearly hugged to death by one of these animals. Rendered wretched, as well as injured in health by the merciless persecutions of his tormentors, poor Gundling escaped to his brother, a learned professor at Halle. But Frederic William and his colleagues of the Tabagie, were lost without their butt; he was fetched back, and the old course of brutal jokes resumed at his expense. But their victim remained silent and melancholy; they relaxed therefore slightly in their efforts, finding that he no longer amused them, and allowed him a little peace. On his death even, one last ferocious joke was perpetrated upon his corpse by the King's order, namely, that of burying him in a wine cask.* He was succeeded in his honourable office by Fassman and Morgenstern.

During the latter years of the King's life his tendency to eccentricity and parsimony increased upon him daily. He was of a singularly restless and active disposition himself, and he abhorred idleness in others. He had long since made a decree that all those women who kept stalls in the streets of Berlin should occupy their time in knitting or spinning,† and a regular return was made of the products of their industry, which was received as part payment of their licence. He also ordained, that a report should be made to the judicial authorities, of all such young women as spent their time in idle amuse-

* See Morgenstern for this account.

† See Rödenbeck, "Beiträge zum Leben F. W. I."

ments; that admonitions should be administered to such young persons and their parents; and that severer measures should be resorted to if amendment did not take place. This hatred of idleness and loss of time, however, now so grew upon the King, that it was dangerous for any one to meet him in the streets on a week-day. An interrogation was sure to ensue; probably a sound rating and much abuse; and if the offender could not give a good account of his business, or stumbled upon a French word in his alarm, a blow of the ever-ready stick, or perhaps even arrest, awaited him. Wherever the King appeared the streets were cleared as if by magic. Upon one occasion he caused two young girls, whom he met on a week-day in the gardens of Charlottenburg, to be put under arrest, without even taking the trouble to inquire their names; their families, who were of the highest respectability, and who did not know what had become of them, were meantime in the greatest anxiety on their account.

The stick which he used in his summary administration of chastisement, was latterly never out of his hand, unless he was too ill to wield it. His health might even, in some degree, be judged of by the freedom of its application; for, says Seckendorf, in his journal, during Frederic William's desperate illness in 1734, 29th October, "The King beats the Jägers because they have stolen wood: the crisis seems over."

His habit of striking had grown so strong upon him, says Morgenstern, that he could not withstand it, but rather "imagined it to be necessary to maintain an orderly household." "He used sometimes to go amongst his servants with his stick, and say, 'You have had nothing for a long time; you must have something, lest you grow lazy.' " In matters of economy he was as original as in other things: he made reductions in all imaginable articles of expenditure, even to the paper on which official reports were handed in to him. In one of his usual marginal comments on those documents he writes, "Stuff not worth the paper. Shall take worse."

As regarded also the actual diet for the Palace consumption,

even the Queen complained, writes Seckendorf, of the "horrible avarice" of the King in this respect. He was a great eater himself, though no epicure, "devouring much solid food, and scarcely masticating it." Nevertheless, he reduced the quantity of food provided for the twenty-four persons who ordinarily constituted the company at the royal table, to the most famine-struck proportions, whilst the expense of its maintenance was reduced to seven Thalers daily.*

Seckendorf says, "The poor Princes and Princesses had often not a mouthful of anything eatable;" and Thiébault, in his "Souvenirs," asserts that Pöllnitz, who was then gentleman of the Chamber, told him the Queen's table was often so sparingly supplied, that he himself had often, out of his own pocket, paid for eggs to furnish an omelette for her supper.

I might here relate numberless anecdotes of Frederic William's eccentricities, but I have already overstepped the limits which I had prescribed to myself. I therefore only insert one or two, in which the Queen is mentioned as one of the parties concerned.

Sophia Dorothea had a set of very splendid diamonds, which she seldom ventured to wear in the presence of her arbitrary and display-abhorring lord. She herself, however, had no objection to array her fine person in costly attire, and upon one occasion, during the King's temporary indisposition, she appeared at a birth-day ball at Monbijou adorned with these magnificent ornaments. The evening was very gay in the absence of the stern master; the dancing and music were at their height, and the Queen was deeply immersed in her game, when the announcement, "The King is coming," caused a general consternation. The music ceased; the dancing stopped; and the Queen, as she sat, hastily unclasped her jewels, and thrust them into her pocket, before the King had time to withdraw his angry gaze from the brilliantly and *extravagantly* lighted apartment, and perceive them.

* Seckendorf's "Journal Secret."

Another story is related by Thiébault, which, were it not for the King's eccentric character, we should scarcely credit. It is well known that he had ordered his own and his wife's coffins to be constructed before his death, and on the completion of the work, says this author, he obliged the horrified Queen, who "looked upon the order almost as a death-warrant," to lie down in hers; he then fitted his own, out of which he was obliged to ask her assistance to raise himself again.

We have but few and incidental notices of Sophia Dorothea during the latter part of her husband's life. She was constantly occupied with her attendance upon him; she seldom left his room for months before his death, save to follow him in his wheeled chair; she bore with his impatience, soothed his suffering, and hers was the hand which, to the last, best smoothed the pillow, and administered the potion. Surely such devotion might atone for many a gust of passion, and many an ungenerous deed of earlier years.

At the time of the marriage of the crown Prince, the Margravine of Baireuth gives a painful description of the alteration in her mother's appearance, and of the increased irritability of her temper, which had been soured by frequent disappointment. But probably the comparative calm which succeeded this event acted beneficially upon her mind and health, and at least partially restored her former equanimity, for at the time of her husband's death, though exceedingly stout, she was still a very fine-looking woman; and she preserved also, that graceful courtesy of manner, and that dignity of demeanour, which had always characterised her. She does not appear even yet to have entirely given up all hopes of an English alliance, as we find Baron Seckendorf (the nephew of that Seckendorf to whom we have so frequently had occasion to allude) referring to a "reconciliation between the houses of England and Prussia negotiated by the Queens;" and again stating that "La Herwein has conveyed the portrait of Ulrica to the Prince of Wales, and entertained Olympia (the Queen) with false hopes." After

awhile comes this passage in the "Journal Secret: "—"Olympia is in despair that the marriage of Ulrica has failed, and irritates the King against my uncle and the Imperial Court, the more that she has now nothing further to hope on the side of England. Nevertheless the Queen of England has written a letter full of tenderness and of assurances of friendship, which Biberius (Grumbkow) has seen in the original. As the Prince of Wales is no longer to be thought of for Ulrica, they speak of the eldest son of the hereditary Prince of Darmstadt, but Biberius does not think that the King will consent, since he has plenty of poor sons-in-law already." At a yet later date follows the entry, "The King is about to marry *les beaux yeux* (the Princess Ulrica) into the family, at which Olympia is in despair." This danger, however, was averted, and Ulrica proved eventually, to be the only one of Sophia Dorothea's daughters who was destined to wear a crown.

The Queen was on good terms with the crown Prince, although her dislike to his wife does not seem to have worn away with time.* It is probable that she hoped, that on the accession of the son who had always shown himself so obedient to her will, and so attentive to her wishes, she would assume a greater weight in the Government than her husband had ever allowed her ; the sequel will show whether her expectations were well founded.

In the beginning of November, 1739, the King was attacked by his last illness. He rallied again sufficiently to go out, and even to join in the sledge excursions which took place during the visit of the Duke and Duchess of Brunswick to Berlin at Christmas. He also privately countermanded the orders which had been given by the various ladies and gentlemen of the Court to the tradesmen for dresses, &c., for a masked ball, of which he disapproved. Finding himself better one evening, he caused himself to be dressed and taken to the smoking-room, to which he summoned the members of the *Tabagie*, and appeared gay and lively. Unfortunately, however, on the entrance of the

* Seckendorf says, "*Olympia häit mortellement la Princesse Royale.*"

crown Prince, these guests, contrary to the laws of the College, rose from their seats. This "homage to the rising sun," as he termed it, so irritated the King, that he dismissed the company in disgrace, and was not reconciled to the crown Prince for some time. But the constant affection and attention which Frederic, much to his credit, testified to his dying father, could not fail to have its effect; and the King embraced him a few days before his death, thanking God for giving him so good a son, and so worthy a successor.

He now became rapidly worse, and it was evident to all that the final struggle was nigh at hand. He made all the arrangements for his funeral, and for a *post-mortem* examination, to ascertain the cause of death; he ordered his coffin to be brought into his room for his inspection, with the greatest coolness. He also spoke long and earnestly with the clergyman, Roloff, who rigidly reminded him of all the acts of oppression and injustice of which he had been guilty. "You do not spare me," said the King, "but I do not see that I have been guilty of any such heinous sin as must exclude me from Heaven; at least I have kept the Commandments, and I have always been faithful to my wife."

The Queen sent for the crown Prince on the night of the 26th of May, in consequence of a change which had taken place in the King. But when Frederic arrived from Rheinsberg, whence he had travelled with all speed, he was astonished to find the King in his chair, in the garden; it was, however, but a momentary rally. He had a long final conversation with the Prince Royal, and took a solemn and tender leave of the Queen, his sons and daughters, and other relatives. On the morning of the 31st of May, he caused himself to be conveyed in his chair, very early, to the Queen's apartment.*

* Pöllnitz met him on this occasion, at six o'clock in the morning; he had also been to the chamber of one of his younger children who was indisposed; he was wrapped in a white dressing gown, and had the marks of death plainly visible in his face.

"Rise," said he, "I have but a few hours to live, and I would at least have the satisfaction of dying in your arms." He then went back to his own room, and being placed at the window, he ordered his horses to be brought out, and presented two of the finest to Anhalt and Haack, as a parting gift; but even here Frederic William was the same man as ever; * the grooms had not saddled the horses to his liking, "Go out," he said to Haack, "and flog me those scoundrels." The Queen then entered, and the King's weakness shortly after overpowering him, he fainted and was put to bed; he recovered yet again and asked for a mirror. "I am changed," he said, "I shall make an ugly face in dying."† He asked his medical attendant Ellert, how long he had to live; he was told that his pulse was failing. His last words were "Lord Jesus, I live in Thee, I die in Thee. Thou art my gain in life and death." The Queen was led out of the room as Frederic William breathed his last, in the arms of his son and successor. Thus, May 31, 1740, in the 52nd year of his age, and the 27th of his reign, died Frederic William, the second King of Prussia.

The loss of a husband, who, despite his frequent harsh treatment, had been sincerely attached to her, and who was endeared by the habitual intercourse of many years, deeply affected Sophia Dorothea. When the Marchioness of Baireuth revisited Berlin, she found her mother clad in deep mourning, and with an air of profound dejection impressed upon her features. This was, perhaps, in part, owing to the fact, that the son whom she had hoped almost wholly to govern, had shown a more utter disinclination to any interference in the Government than his

* He was very particular, in practising his troops with the musket, that the report of the pieces should present one unbroken roll, like a chromatic scale on a musical instrument; and when he was giving orders for his body-guard to fire the last salute at his funeral, he called out briskly, "But take care the dogs don't bungle at it."

† Frederic William was terribly altered in personal appearance long before his death. Bielefeld describes him, in 1738, as being excessively corpulent, his head sunk deep between his shoulders, whilst various shades of "red, yellow, blue, and green," mingled frightfully in his complexion.

father ever had done. He had indeed, with perhaps a spice of that half-playful malice, with which he had raised and then quenched the hopes of some of the needy courtiers who had paid court to the rising sun, raised her expectations, by privately asking her counsel—about the building of an opera house! He was, however, always most tenderly respectful to her. When, after his father's funeral, she addressed him as "Your Majesty," he interrupted her by saying, "Always call me your son, that title is dearer to me than the royal dignity."* He always presented himself at her *levées* at Monbijou, where she now constantly resided. On entering her presence, he used to take off his hat, and remain standing till she requested him to be seated.

He also did her the justice to say that she had brought up her children well, as far as the King had left them in her hands, and he never accused her of having been, in any measure, the cause of his misfortunes. An anecdote is related of him, which shows the jealousy with which his filial reverence guarded his mother's name from every approach to disrespect from others. When, during his journey to receive the homage of his Westphalian subjects, the fancy to tread for once on French ground and see a French garrison, or, as some persons imagine, the idea of an incognito visit to Paris, led him to pass the French frontier and visit Strasbourg, under the name of the Count du Four, the wife of the governor Maréchal de Broglie, ignorant of the rank of her guest, asked him if he had ever been at Hanover; he replied in the negative, but asked her if she had. "Oh, yes," she said, "my father was the French Minister there, and I knew the Princess Sophia Dorothea, now Queen Dowager of Prussia; she possessed so much amiability and goodness, and so many virtues, that she would have been perfect, had it not been for a little of that pride from which the great houses of Germany can never quite free themselves." The King replied, "I beg to inform you, madam, that I have never

* Kügler.

heard the Queen Dowager of Prussia spoken of, save with the most profound respect." "Oh, monsieur, she deserves it, there is but this little tinge of the morgue Germanique"—"I have just observed to you, madam, that it is only in terms of the most profound respect, and without *any* reserve, that Her Majesty has been spoken of before me," interrupted Frederic, when fortunately the return of the Governor broke off the conversation.

Of her ten children, the daughters were now all married, with the exception of the two youngest princesses, Ulrica and Amelia, who remained with their mother after their father's death. Prince William was now in the first dawn of his manhood, he was, says Bielefeld, "the handsomest man I ever saw, tall and well proportioned, with brown hair and blue eyes." But his education had been terribly neglected, for he having been his father's favourite, the latter had kept him constantly with him, both in the camp and in the sports of the field; Prince William improved himself much in this respect after his father's death, but still he could never express himself with ease, and he was always exceedingly shy when in company. He was a great admirer of the fair sex, and was always over head and ears in love with some fair damsel of the Court. At one time he caused his mother much uneasiness by the violence of his passion for her beautiful maid of honour, Laura von Pannewitz, who, "tall and tower-like, half Diana half Venus; naïve and tender,"* although she was by no means insensible to the attractions of her princely lover, nevertheless relieved the fears of the Queen by espousing the Baron von Voss, a man for whom she had no inclination, in order to free herself from the addresses of Prince William.

Prince Henry seems more to have resembled his elder brother in character than either of the others, and Prince Ferdinand was then a mere boy of ten years of age; they were both still under the care of tutors.

Sophia Dorothea's dislike to her son's amiable consort ap-

* Thiébauld.

pears to have remained in full force for several years after Frederic II.'s accession to the throne had given Elizabeth Christina the first place in all questions of precedence, and thrown Sophia Dorothea, as Queen Dowager, into the background.

She had no reason, however, to lament any loss of actual power, in such matters as Frederic the Great allowed to come under female direction: her audience chamber was quite as much thronged as that of the reigning Queen, and the ambassadors of foreign Courts would sooner have thought of neglecting the claims of the latter to their homage, than those of the Queen-mother.

It was to her house that Frederic paid the first visit on his return from his campaigns; and it was there also that he appointed his Queen to meet him on these occasions. The Queen Dowager, too, was always invited to Potsdam (the King's general residence after his accession, until Sans-souci was built) at least once in the year, whilst the reigning Queen was sorely mortified at her own exclusion from these invitations.

Sophia Dorothea's name occurs in many incidental notices after the decease of her husband. We find her in queenly array of black velvet and diamonds, dignifying the wedding festival of her son, Prince William, in 1742. Again we observe her glowing with maternal pride, and shedding tears of maternal tenderness at the marriage and departure of her beautiful daughter Ulrica, the future Queen of Sweden, in 1744. In far less dignified guise, she figures at Charlottenberg, when during a great festival given by Frederic at that place in 1747, a fire broke out in the room adjoining her bed-room. Bielefeld met her in the courtyard, which was filled with terrified and bewildered maids of honour, courtiers and servants, in all stages of undress, herself in *déshabille*, carried in a sedan-chair by two soldiers, and attended by the Chamberlain Pöllnitz, in dressing-gown, slippers and nightcap. Her august presence reminded the lively Baron of his own deficiency of clothing, at the same time that it brought vividly to his memory that

passage from Racine: "Moi, la fille, femme et sœur de votre maître!"

The two Queens remained in Berlin together during Frederic's absence in the Silesian war, and rejoiced in common on his triumphant return; after which time, with the exception of occasional misunderstandings, they appear to have been on tolerably friendly terms; and towards the close of the Queen Mother's life, the gentle, unassuming character of her daughter-in-law seems, at last, to have overcome the long-enduring prejudices of Sophia Dorothea, whom we find treating her with affection and confidence.

A gradual and gentle decay appears to have rather warned Sophia Dorothea of advancing old age, than of the approach of death; her son supped with her at Monbijou, on the night of the 19th August, 1756, before going to join the army at the commencement of the Seven Years' War. He visited her once again after his first triumphant campaign in January, 1757. His last visit on this occasion was, as before, paid to his mother at Monbijou, and he parted from her for the last time, on the thirteenth of that month.

After that event her health was not so materially worse as to give cause for alarm. She wrote to her daughter Charlotte, now Duchess of Brunswick Bevern, in June, "My health remains much in the same state. I suffer always from great weakness, although I do all I can to recover my strength; nevertheless, I remain very feeble. I see that I must arm myself with much patience." This letter reached the Duchess on the 28th, the very day on which her mother tranquilly breathed her last.

There is no reason to suppose that Formey's conjecture, that the news of the disastrous battle of Kollin proved a "nail in her coffin," was true; the news probably reached Berlin a little subsequently to her decease. Her son received the sad intelligence of his loss whilst still sunk in bitter contemplation of the dreadful consequences of that defeat. This additional blow

went nigh to crush the small remains of hope which yet lurked in his heart : he shut himself up in his tent, and refused to see any one. In these moments of despondency, dark thoughts of seeking oblivion to his anguish in a repose as cold and silent as hers for whom he mourned, are said from time to time to have crossed his mind, and to have been cherished by him, rather than dismissed as fearful and dangerous guests.

The first communication in which he suffered his grief to find vent was a letter to his sister the Margravine of Baireuth ; and the expressions of which he makes use, show with how deep a tenderness and veneration her memory was cherished by him, and how terrible was the blank which her loss had left in his heart. And, certainly no higher testimony can be paid to the memory of a parent than such tributes of love and grief from a man like Frederic, of whom those who knew him in later days, doubted whether such a sentiment as that of affection existed in his heart.

LIFE OF
ELIZABETH CHRISTINA,

OF BRUNSWICK BEVERN,
FOURTH QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.

"CÆSAR desired that his wife should afford no occasion to be spoken of, and Queen Elizabeth Christina fulfilled these conditions entirely," says Thiébault, in his memoirs of his intercourse with the great monarch of Prussia. The remark is just, and equally so the commentary upon it—that she remained thus unobtrusively in the background because it was her Cæsar's unexpressed wish, rather than because it was his declared will that she should do so. The unloved wife of a man whom she idolized, she bore with submissive sweetness and Christian resignation the coldness of that isolated position, which, like solitary imprisonment to an active mind, is productive of absolute torture to a person endowed with warm affections.

Dwelling, as she did, with intense interest and affection upon the thought of her husband and all that pertained to him, yet she never intruded herself upon him, never even once set foot within the monastic walls of Sans-souci; but quietly she employed her time in a round of instructive employment and gentle beneficence, which brought down upon her the blessings of all who became acquainted with the quiet benevolence, which did not let her left hand know the doings of her right.

Her husband had united himself with her in a marriage, which he confessedly regarded as the heavy price of his free-

dom.* This she knew, and she bore that lot—of all others the most difficult to bear, the sense of being an incumbrance—with a fortitude and humility which, to my mind, elevate this little-known Princess to something not far short of a heroine.

We must now revert to the period of the enlargement of the crown Prince at the time of his sister's marriage.

How entirely both Grumbkow and Seckendorf possessed the key to the secret workings of Frederic William's character, and how ruthlessly they used their power of alarming his constitutional obstinacy, by the fear of an appearance of yielding to any external influence, must have been abundantly manifest in the course of the preceding narrative. Now, therefore, whilst as usual acting as the blind tool of men, with whose astuteness his own blunt simplicity of character had no chance of competition, he undertook completely to vindicate his absolute independence of action, by marrying his son, not to an English Princess, which would have been highly prejudicial to the Austrian interests, but to the Empress's own niece—an idea which, *of course*, had only been suggested to him by his own personal friendship for her father, and not in the least by the artful imperial envoy, and the worthless favourite in Austrian pay, to whom he submitted all his most private thoughts with such childish confidence!

So Frederic William believed, and so accordingly he acted.

The Princess who was the object of this most unbiassed selection, was the eldest daughter of Duke Ferdinand Albert of Brunswick Bevern, who had married his cousin, Antoinette. Amalie of Brunswick Blankenburg, sister of that Princess Elizabeth Christina, who, after so many conscientious scruples, had at length embraced the Roman Catholic religion on her marriage with the Archduke Charles, afterwards the Emperor Charles VI.†

* "It should be remembered that I have been constrained to this marriage whether I would or not, and that it is the price of my freedom."—*Letter of Fred. to Grumbkow*.—See Preuss's "Jugendjahre."

† This marriage took place at Barcelona. The Princess, in changing her religion, had yielded to the persuasions of her uncle, the Duke of Brunswick

There had been, at first, an idea in the Austrian councils, of marrying the crown Prince of Prussia to the young Archduchess Maria Theresa, but Frederic William was staunchly and conscientiously Protestant, and would never have listened to the idea of his son's becoming a Roman Catholic; besides, faithfully as he was of Austria, his easily-roused suspicion would have taken alarm at the prospect of the alliance of his heir with so near and so powerful a neighbour. Therefore the Empress's niece and namesake, Elizabeth Christina of Brunswick Bevern, was selected as a person to whom no such alarming apprehensions could apply.

The suggestion had been artfully made a considerable time previously to Frederic William; he mentioned the Princess of Brunswick Bevern to the Queen, as has been stated, before his quarrel with Hotham. It had not been allowed to die out of his memory since; he now proceeded to act upon it.

Shortly after the marriage of the Margravine of Baireuth, Seckendorf was commissioned to broach the subject of his marriage to the crown Prince. Three Princesses were proposed to him for his nominal selection, but his subsequent letters show how little freedom of choice was actually allowed him. "He is resolved to marry," writes the ambassador (19th June, 1731), "because he sees that he cannot hope for entire freedom on any other condition: he has decided for the Princess of Bevern, provided that she be *ni sottè ni dégoutante*." On the 4th of February the ensuing year a letter from Frederic William announced to the crown Prince, that it was the paternal pleasure that he should take to wife the eldest Princess of Bevern, whom, having examined into the "conduct and education of all the

Wolfenbittel, the head of the house, who had told her that it was his intention himself, on conscientious grounds, to become a Roman Catholic. When she found that, after her marriage, he did not fulfil his engagement, she again became remorseful and uneasy, and her uncle performed his promise. Proposals of marriage had before been made by the Archduke to the Princess Caroline of Anspach, but she had declined to make the necessary change of religion, even with the chance of the imperial crown in prospect.

Princesses of the land," he had found to be "well brought up, modest, and retiring, as women ought to be."

He further gives his "dear son Fritz" the information that the Princess is "neither handsome nor ugly," and desires him to inform the Queen of his engagement. Frederic immediately communicated to his father his entire submission to his will in this, as in all other things. At the same time, with a faint hope of inducing Grumbkow to use his influence over the King, he was writing to that treacherous favourite in terms of intimacy, and even of friendship, to express his intense hope that his father would not marry him to a fool, for report spoke slightly of the capacity of the Princess of Bevern. He says he would infinitely prefer a coquette, or even worse, to a blockhead. Again, with deeper and more creditable feeling, he intreats Grumbkow to induce his father, "as a Christian," to reflect on the evil consequences and the sins caused by ill-assorted marriages. "If there are any honest people left in the world," says he, "let them endeavour to save me from the most perilous position I have ever been placed in. Good God! has not the King seen enough of ill-assorted marriages in the case of my sister of Anspach and her husband, who hate each other like fire?"

Again he writes, "They say she has a sister who at least has common sense; why prefer the eldest?"

Nevertheless, despite all his passionate entreaties and remonstrances (it is by no means certain that they ever reached his father), the engagement for binding him to a woman whom he had never seen, and against whom he entertained a most violent prejudice, whether justly or unjustly founded, was ratified between the respective fathers. The Duke of Brunswick Bevern was regarded by Frederic William with great esteem. He expressed his opinion that there was "no better man amongst all the Kings and Princes of Europe;" and thus, forgetting the manœuvres he had himself put in practice, to obtain the object to whom his inclination pointed at the period of his own marriage, he disregarded the inclinations of the crown Prince altogether, and

married him, as the latter expressed it, "as if my father were marrying for himself and not for me." He wrote to his sister, the Margravine of Baireuth, who, with her husband was now at Baireuth, "They are about to force me to marry a Princess whom I do not know. They have extorted a promise from me which has cost me much pain."

The Queen was excessively irritated at this second complete overthrow of her plans for an English alliance. She set no bounds either to her anger, or to the expression of it, constantly speaking of the future crown Princess in the bitterest and most contemptuous terms. Matters were not improved after the introduction of the Princess of Brunswick Bevern to her bridegroom and her mother-in-law, which took place shortly afterwards, when she visited Berlin, accompanied by her father and mother.

Elizabeth Christina was then seventeen; she had but recently recovered from the small-pox, and was still disfigured by the marks of the spots. She had been brought up very privately at her father's Court, and was as shy as any other country girl would have been, on being brought into the midst of an assemblage of strangers, and paraded before the scrutinizing gaze of the Queen's imposing majesty, the said majesty being very much disposed to crush the young intruder, who either lisped and stammered such incomprehensible replies to her cold compliments, or else remained in embarrassed silence.

There was a grand ball given on the 10th of March, at which the King publicly announced that the crown Prince and the Princess Elizabeth Christina of Brunswick Bevern were betrothed. The Queen could not help herself; she could only be ungracious to the last degree, and make no secret of the fact, that she considered her future daughter-in-law a fool. She also gave vent to her feelings by writing to the Marchioness of Baireuth, "La Princesse est belle, mais sotte comme un panier." "I know not how my son will ever accommodate himself to the young *guenuche*." *

* Young ape.

Perhaps the person who looked upon the poor young Princess with the least unfavourable eyes was the crown Prince himself; but he was cold and constrained in his manner towards her, and she was terribly afraid of her future bridegroom.

In the beginning of April this visit, so trying to the principal parties concerned, came to a conclusion, and the Princess returned, gladly enough, to the paternal mansion.

The two fathers of the young couple seemed perfectly content with the arrangement, and two other persons—Grumbkow and Seckendorf—certainly had reason to be satisfied with the triumphant success of their schemes.—What did it matter that an innocent girl was made the sacrifice to the interested views of all parties?

“I take her as the price of my freedom,” said the Prince, “but I can never love her.” The King regarded her with complacency, as the seal of his absolute mastery over the unruly will of his son; the Austrian ambassador and the Prussian minister as the cipher, of no weight save as to its place in the account; whilst the Queen beheld in her the odious stumbling-block which had overthrown the cherished plans of years of anxious scheming.

This was but a painful prospect to meet the eyes of a timid, youthful bride; fortunate, indeed, was it, if the early perceptions of Elizabeth Christina were not sufficiently clear to allow the whole terrible future to break upon her, in all its bleak heartlessness, at once.

She was accompanied, on her return to her father's Court, by Madame de Katsch,* an accomplished lady, who received the onerous charge of forming the mind and manners of the future Queen of Prussia. A first-rate dancing-master was also provided, by the care of Seckendorf, to reduce the really fine person of the untrained and somewhat awkward girl, to some degree of obedience to the rules of elegance of carriage and dignity of deportment.

Whilst this needful process was going on with the bride-

* Widow of the severe judge Katsch. See above; Life of Sophia Dorothea.

elect, and whilst she was still allowed to enjoy a measure, at least, of freedom, and the society of her numerous brothers and sisters—for she was the third child of a family of fourteen, the crown Prince, as an earnest of the considerations for which he had given his consent to take her, received the command of a regiment and an establishment at R^üppin from his father, whilst 5000 imperial ducats found their way to the future relative of the Empress, to relieve him from the most pressing claims of his creditors.

To occupy his leisure at R^üppin he made a garden, and built a rustic temple ; as mentioned above also, he took pains in the drilling and disciplining of his regiment, and as the surest road to his father's favour, expended considerable sums in obtaining tall recruits ;* and though he thus involved himself in fresh expenses, which his own resources, even with the additions which were sometimes supplied both from Austria and Russia, were quite inadequate to defray, and though a most harassing burden of debt was thus accumulated, still the chief end was gained—his father was appeased, and absolutely gracious.

He corresponded likewise with his betrothed, although it is true that his father found fault because the correspondence was not lively enough, and Frederic confessed that he found it difficult to fill his page ; † gifts also passed between them, and packages of the famous Brunswick sausages were despatched from Salzdahlum to R^üppin, as a present from the Princess to her intended lord !

When the Margravine of Baireuth returned to Berlin for the first time, on a visit to her parents, of course the subject of the marriage of her brother was foremost on the tapis ; and she describes her astonishment and pain at the manner in which the Princess of Brunswick Bevern was spoken of by the Queen

* Frederic had no penchant for tall soldiers himself, neither did he imagine them to be better suited for military purposes than men of ordinary stature. The tall regiment was disbanded immediately after his father's death.

† Preuss, Letter of Frederic to Grumbkow.

and the Princess Charlotte at supper, in the presence not only of Prince Frederic, but even of the domestics in attendance.

“Your brother is in despair,” said the Queen. “The Princess is *une vraie bête*—she answers every question by ‘yes,’ or ‘no,’ accompanied by a silly laugh, *qui fait mal au cœur*.”

The Princess Charlotte added some traits to this portrait, which certainly did no credit to her own delicacy of feeling. The Margravine observing her brother colour, and appear as if the conversation displeased and wounded him, changed the subject. After she had retired to her apartments he came to her, and himself broached the subject of his marriage. “As regards the Princess,” said he, “I do not dislike her so much as I pretend to do. I affect to find her intolerable, in order that the King may better appreciate my obedience. She is pretty, her complexion is of lilies and of roses, and her features are delicate; the general effect of her countenance is that of beauty. She has no education, and her carriage is bad, but I flatter myself that, when she is here, you will have the goodness to form her a little.”

Yet once again a change had seemed about to come over the face of affairs, when the English influence took for a time the ascendant at Vienna, and consequent variations began to be manifested by the ministerial compass at Berlin, in its set to the magnetic pole at the imperial capital.

Despite the betrothal of the crown Prince and of his sister Philippina Charlotte, a new proposition was made for marrying the crown Prince to the Princess Amelia of England, and the Princess Charlotte to the Prince of Wales; whilst Prince Charles of Brunswick was to receive the Princess Ann of England instead of the bride before destined for him.

But Frederic William had pledged his word to his friend the Duke of Brunswick, and, firm to his principles of honour, he would not yield a tittle in this respect: the preparations for the marriage therefore went on, and the day was fixed. The King, the Queen, and the crown Prince set off towards the

dwelling of the bride a few days before that on which the important event was to take place. In due time they arrived at Salzdahlum, or Salzthal. At that eleventh hour even, Seckendorf was charged to endeavour to shake the King's resolution, and stop the marriage; but the proposal was rejected with indignation, and Frederic William afterwards reverted more than once to the "infamy" which his friend would have had him commit at Salzthal.* The wits of England and Hanover found plenty of scope for their satire in this marriage, and Frederic William was so enraged at the reports which reached him, that he would not allow a formal notification of his son's marriage to be sent to London.

The marriage finally took place on the 12th of June, 1733. Frederic is described by his sister to have affected to be in a frightful temper, and to have scolded and stormed at his attendants at least, in his father's presence. Von Hahnke's life of Elizabeth Christina gives a detailed account of the ceremony, and of the sermon which was preached by Mosheim on the occasion; but I omit the description, in order to return with the King and Queen to Berlin.

The latter, her enforced duty fulfilled, gave full vent to her spleen on her return. She told her daughter that, despite the efforts of Madame le Katsch, the Princess was more "*bête*" than ever, and that the Prince could not endure her, although she allowed that at first sight she might make a pleasing impression.

The King described her to the Margravine as "a good child, but wants forming."

In a few days the subject of so much criticism, herself arrived at Berlin, whither Frederick had preceded her. She was received very cordially by her father-in-law, but she was weary and shy, and heated and disordered by the journey; the Margravine of Baireuth, remembering her promise to her

* "Seckendorf mich aus Leben bringt," said the King. "Infamie begeben machen, die Heirath zu Salzthal abzuändern."—"Journal Sécret."

brother to befriend the young stranger, went with her to her apartments, where Prince Frederic, in a speech which seems to have frightened the poor child into a state of greater bewilderment than before, introduced his sister, as one whose advice he wished her to follow upon all occasions. The Margravine then offered herself to be her tire-woman, and arrange the fair, naturally-curling locks which had been all unpowdered and dishevelled by the journey. When Frederic saw his bride receive all these kind attentions without so much as venturing a word of thanks, or the slightest return of his sister's caresses, he grew impatient, and exclaimed in most unbridegroom-like terms, "*Peste soit de la bête ! Remerciez donc ma sœur,*" which unceremonious adjuration produced from the startled girl, as near an approach to her dancing-master's last lesson on the curtsy, as the state of her nerves would admit at the moment. The Margravine describes her at this time as tall, but not graceful, with a dazzlingly fair complexion, relieved by a vivid colour, large pale blue eyes, without much expression, and *mignon* features, whose worst falling off was a bad set of teeth, whilst the "*tout ensemble* of the face was so charming and so infantine, that one might have imagined it to belong to a child of twelve years old." And a mere child it indeed was, that was thus placed in circumstances which rapidly enough developed her into womanhood, and endowed her at the same time, like the Undine of her own country's story, with a woman's heart, and all a woman's portion of love and sorrow.

There were not many festivities upon the occasion of the entry into Berlin ; Frederic William's favourite German comedy was the chief amusement provided, at which the ladies and gentlemen stifled their yawns as well as they could, and dared not vent their ill-humour at being obliged to attend. There was a grand review also, and the party having to start at three A.M., there was no time after supper to go to bed before dressing for it ; when they arrived at the ground, they found a dozen tents, each calculated to hold about five persons, pre-

pared for their accommodation ; and as the company had required eighty carriages to bring them, it may be supposed that the crowding in these tents was rather dense, and the sun being hot and no refreshments provided, the fatigue was excessive. Another of the enjoyments on the occasion of the marriage of the heir of Prussia, was a procession in open carriages, which only went at a foot-pace; the rain meanwhile descended in torrents; and the ladies, thoroughly soaked of course, having no accommodation for change of apparel, appeared at the subsequent ball with their dresses clinging around them in most ludicrous style. The Margravine gives a full description of all these most lugubrious festivities.

The heirs of the Kurbrandenburg family had in former times, as part of their apanage, commonly possessed a seat in the Mark; Frederic William now revived this custom, by bestowing upon his eldest son the estate of Rheinsberg, which he had just purchased. Rheinsberg* is not far from the town of Rüppin. Watered by the little river Rhyn, it rises like a green oasis, adorned with shadowy, graceful trees, out of the midst of the sterile sands and impoverished vegetation of the surrounding country, whilst horses of noble growth, smooth-skinned oxen and fine-wooled sheep, mark the richer character of the district. Here Frederic found the ruins of a castle, whose walls were almost washed by the waters of the Grünerick Lake. He now set himself sedulously to work to repair this edifice, and quickly, amidst the beech-woods which encircle the lake, arose an enchanted palace, inhabited by a magician whose fame was soon to spread through all lands. Into the penetralia of this, his chosen abode, none but the sage philosopher, the gifted poet, or the open-hearted and brilliant companion, were ever admitted. Here at length, released from all restriction, was Frederic free to follow the dictates of that refined taste which had cost him so many trials in his earlier years, and to indulge in that communion with men of

* For description see Förster and Preuss.

talent and of letters, which his mind had always craved. Here, too, he re-commenced the formation of a library, the first thousand volumes which he had collected having been sold at the time of his imprisonment.

I quote Baron Bielefeld's description of this fairy palace.—“The situation of the castle is beautiful; the waters of a large lake almost lave its very walls. On the further side of this lake, a beautiful wood of oak and beech spreads like an amphitheatre. The original castle consisted of the main building and one wing, at the end of which stood an old tower; this edifice and its position were well calculated to exhibit the taste and genius of the crown Prince, and the talent of Knobelsdorf, who is the director of the building. The main edifice has been repaired and embellished by means of bay-windows, statues, and other ornaments: a corresponding wing with a tower has been added at the other end, and these two towers connected by means of a row of columns: this erection has given to the whole the form of a square. At the entrance is a bridge, ornamented with statues, which serve as lamp-bearers. The entrance to the court is through a fine gate, over which Knobelsdorf has placed the inscription, ‘*Frederico tranquillitatem colenti.*’ The interior of the castle is both splendid and tasteful: there is a profusion of gilding, which, however, has been guided by the hand of taste. The Prince prefers soft colours, on which account the furniture and hangings are either violet, sky-blue, pale green, or flesh colour, ornamented with silver: a hall, which will be the masterpiece of the castle is not yet completed; it is to be panelled with marble, and adorned with large mirrors framed with gilded bronze. The celebrated Pesne has painted the ceiling, which represents the rising of the sun. On one side appears retreating night, veiled in a dark mantle, and attended by her sorrowful birds and by the Hours; whilst on the other are represented the morning star, in the form of Venus, the white horses of the sun chariot, and Apollo flinging his first beams. I hold this picture as symbolical, and as point-

ing to a perhaps not far distant period.”* The same author goes on to give a description of the then incomplete gardens, with the shady alleys leading to the Egyptian obelisk in the centre; the sheltered seats; the temple of Bacchus, shrouded with cypress, ivy and vine; the pleasure boats for water parties on the lake, and all the other means which the Prince had here collected for the enjoyment and embellishment of life. But what is the description of a dwelling without that of its principal inhabitants? Let us, therefore, hasten to supply the deficiency from the plentiful materials which are left us on this subject.

At the time of which we are speaking, Frederic, crown Prince of Prussia, was about twenty-two years of age, and of strikingly-prepossessing appearance: he was not tall, but perfectly well made, and “rather delicate than slim;” he wore his own wavy, light-brown hair, the severing of whose curls at the stern command of his father, had, in his boyhood, cost him so many tears that the compassionate hair-dresser had spared this natural ornament as much as possible. His features, which bore the Hanoverian stamp, were good; but the eyes were the characteristic part of the physiognomy; large, soft, blue and melting in their ordinary expression, yet they could, at times, flash forth such terrible flames as seemed to wither the rash or insolent offender who had roused them. The peculiarly-piercing expression of these wonderful eyes, which seemed at once to penetrate the character, thoughts and wishes of the individual upon whom they were bent, has been the subject of frequent remark by those who had experienced their power. He was by no means unconscious of his own personal advantages, and had no objection to enhance them by an elegant and *recherchée* toilette; his small delicate hands and taper fingers lacked neither jewels, nor lace to set them off; and he used in his youth to pride himself on the remark of his dancing-master, that he had the smallest foot amongst his pupils.

* Baron Bielefeld's “Lettres Familières sur Fred. le Grand et sa Cour de 1738-1760.”

There was then little in the appearance of the delicate and somewhat effeminate-looking young man, to indicate the boundless energy and indomitable perseverance of the character that lurked under that soft exterior, only gleaming forth at times in the sudden wild-fire of the eye which now and then betokened the unfathomed depths beneath. Few or none had an idea of what capabilities were in the man, his father perhaps less than any other person; he used to say, "Fritzchen knows nothing at all of affairs; when all is at sixes and sevens, I shall laugh in my grave."

Before his death, however, an inkling of the talent of his son seems, from time to time, to have dawned upon, and filled his mind with wondering surprise. Probably at this time Frederic did not know the extent of his own powers; these were the halcyon days of his hitherto harassed youth; his young genius was but playfully trying its wings in fluttering over the flowers that for the first time strewn its pathway, unconscious of the sleeping fires within, which were to rush through all its pulses, and bid it, on the first impulse, dart up straightway, like a young eagle, to the sun.

The crown Princess had formed, perhaps, the nearest approximation to a correct estimate of her husband's powers; he had dawned upon her newly-awakening intellect with all the resplendence of a young god, her expanding mind was filled with boundless love and admiration for the man who, whilst he awed her, had first awakened thought, feeling, and finally a deep, silent, shamefaced and secret idolatry within her bosom.

Bielefeld's description of Elizabeth Christina in 1738, would lead us to imagine that the efforts of Madame de Katsch and the dancing-master had been crowned with triumphant success; but perhaps we should be nearer the truth, in supposing that the love for her husband, which now inspired her whole being, was the agent that had taught her to lend to her natural attractions the additional charm of elegance and grace, whilst it had animated her beauty with the magic of expression.

"The Princess," says he, "is of noble stature; I never saw more symmetrical proportions; her neck, hands and feet, might serve as models for a painter; her hair is *blond-cendré*, and shines like pearls when powdered; her skin is very delicate, and she has large blue eyes, which are soft, but yet full of life, her glance is expressive. She has an open countenance, beautiful eyebrows, a little nose, a pleasant mouth, a very pretty chin; her whole countenance is expressive of gentleness and goodness. All the Graces seem to have united to form this Princess. Even the little negligences which one sometimes perceives in her dress or posture are happy, and never at the expense of good taste. This amiable Princess speaks little, especially at table, but what she says is thoughtful and womanly; and shows a cultivation which she has formed for herself." Perhaps Bielefeld may have been a partial judge, for he confesses to have been perfectly enchanted with the beauty of the spot, and the charm of the society at Rheinsberg. Having thus given a sketch of the principal inhabitants of that place, let us also take a hasty glance at the individuals who composed the rest of the social circle there.

There was the Hofmarschall Wolden, with his pretty and agreeable wife. There was the veteran Senning,* the old mathematical tutor of the Prince, whom in his crippled state he took home to live with him. Then there was the amiable Chazot. And Knoblesdorf, pensive but talented, who had left the army at the call of art. There was the witty and friendly Jordan, who, on the death of his wife, unable to bear the familiar associations of home, had flung aside his ecclesiastical garb, and fled to foreign lands to seek distraction from sad thought, and at last, burying his softened grief deep in his heart, had returned to be "a favourite with all the Court" at Rheinsberg. But, above all, there was the Prince's "Cæsarion"† Kaiserling, who, clad in *robe de chambre*, and gun on shoulder,

* Senning had lost a leg in the wars in Flanders.

† Cæsarion was the name by which Kaiserling was admitted into the "Order

“rushes in like a hurricane,” talks a dozen different languages in the same conversation, with the same fluency, and knows everything better than anybody else, from state politics, mathematics, painting, and architecture, down to horses, dogs, fashions in dress, and the last new step in the Rigodon.

Then, beside these and other habitual residents, such as Graun, the chapel-master ; * Pesne, the painter ; † Benda, the first violinist in Europe ; and frequently Quanz, the flute-player, and other musical celebrities,—brilliant strangers from all parts of the world frequently glittered for a time amidst the select *cotée* of “Frederic’s Rest.” But we must by no means omit the ladies who formed so important a part in the attractions of this little Court.

Beside Frau von Wolden, and the high-minded and gentle Madame de Katsch, by whom her royal pupil is now “nearly idolized on account of that goodness and mildness which in her high position seem doubly fair,” ‡ there is Fräulein von Schack, who is lively and amiable, but no beauty, though possessed of a well-formed hand and a very pretty foot ; and though it be treachery to the sex, we quote the gallant Baron’s comment on the opportunities which he had enjoyed of ascertaining the fact :—“The ladies know how to make the most of their advantages, and if they had but a pretty *Ohrlüppchen*, § they would contrive to show it,” and often did Fräulein von Schack’s pretty foot peep from beneath the long petticoat then the *mode*.

Fräulein von Walmoden, the second maid of honour, tall, fair-haired, shapely, and handsome, but without much character,

of Bayard,” founded by Frederic and his friends ; he is mentioned frequently by that name in the correspondence with Voltaire, whom he visited at Cirey. The crown Prince also called him the “swan of Mitau” (his birthplace).

* The composer of the “Passion.”

† Antoine Pesne, a portrait-painter. The best portrait of Frederic the Great is by him.

‡ Bielefeld.

§ Lobe of the ear.

does her ornamental part on the stage very well, and occasionally inspires a languid flame in the bosom of some inflammable courtier, who is more supremely idle than usual.

Beside the crown Princess's Oberhofmeisterin and maids of honour, sundry of the fairest ladies in Berlin (some of whom were supposed to possess more than common attractions for the crown Prince) were no unfrequent visitors at Rheinsberg. Amongst these were the Frau von Morian, who figures as "le Tourbillon" in his verses; Frau von Brandt, who had a greater taste for intrigue than was either safe or commendable, and who, in furtherance of her foolish and ambitious hopes that Prince Henry's boyish penchant for her sister might decoy him into a marriage in her family, would have vilely sold her husband's honour and her own fair fame; and several other ladies, whose visits were of less questionable purport.

For the occupations and amusements of the life at Rheinsberg I must again quote from Baron Bielefeld's* enthusiastic description of the way in which he passed his time during his sojourn there.

"All who live in the castle," says he, "enjoy the most unconstrained freedom. The crown Prince and Princess are only visible at table, at balls, concerts, or other fêtes in which they can participate. Time, which, to the thinking man, is so precious, yet, to the superficial, seems so long, is not here passed in sleeping till a mid-day breakfast; in mollifying angry creditors; in weighty and secret conferences with tailors and mantua-makers; or in the toilette and useless chat in ante-chambers. Every one thinks, reads, draws, writes, plays an instrument, amuses or employs himself in his apartment till dinner;

* Bielefeld became known to Frederic on the occasion of the latter's reception into the order of Freemasons. He was of the *bürger* class, and was an inhabitant of Hamburg. On Frederic's accession he was sent on a diplomatic mission to England; he gives an amusing account of the pleasures of the then fashionable gardens of Vauxhall, and speaks with astonishment of the ferocious character of the amusements, such as bull and bear-baiting, cock-fighting, &c., to which the otherwise humane English nation was then addicted.

then each one dresses himself well and carefully, but without ostentation or expense, and goes to the eating-room. All the employments of the crown Prince display the man of taste. His conversation at table is inimitable; he speaks much and well; it seems as if no subject were foreign to him; and his remarks on all subjects are novel and original. His wit is like the never-failing fire of Vesta.* He tolerates difference of opinion, and understands the art of drawing out the brilliancy of others, by affording occasion for the utterance of some *jeu d'esprit*, or happy thought. He jests and ridicules, yet without bitterness, and without taking a witty reply amiss.

"Do not think the nimbus which surrounds the crown Prince has dazzled me. Were he merely a private man, I would willingly go miles on foot, if I could thereby ensure the pleasure of his society.

"After dinner the gentlemen visit the ladies' apartment, to take coffee; all assemble, and chat together pleasantly. The Prince and Princess take coffee in their own apartment. The evening is dedicated to music; the Prince has a concert in his saloon, to which it is a great honour to be invited."

We find in the same agreeable author many such descriptions of days of intellectual enjoyment and nights of festivity; of gay balls, in which the Prince doffed the uniform in which, as an officer in his father's army, it was the best policy to appear, and arrayed in "pale green silk, richly-embroidered with silver, with broad silver Brandenburgs and tassels, and attended by a train of cavaliers, similarly but less splendidly attired," joined the dancers, and displayed more "lightness and grace" than any other gentleman present, whilst a throng of the fairest and noblest of the Prussian ladies were emulous of the distinction of his hand for the set; and though all were richly dressed, and all looked to their best advantage in the soft warm light of the ball-room, "yet the crown Princess appeared the sun of all this glittering firmament of stars."

* This comparison is not altogether appropriate to the subject of Frederic's wit.

Sometimes, though rarely, scenes of more boisterous gaiety took the place of the refined amusements of Rheinsberg. One more quotation from Bielefeld, and we must quit the green shades and luxurious saloons of this pleasant retreat.

“I lead a truly ravishing life here. A royal table, godlike wines, heavenly music, delicious walks in the gardens and woods, water excursions, the magic of art and science, pleasant intercourse—all in this fairy palace unites to embellish life. Yet as nothing on earth is perfect, a drop of sadness mingles in my cup. I must prepare you soon to see me in Hamburg with a couple of great scars upon my forehead, one eye blue and the other extinguished, and a cheek like a rainbow. I have to thank an unlucky Bacchusfest for these adornments. About a fortnight ago the Prince was unusually cheerful at table, a few glasses of champagne had set our wits in motion. The Prince thought that this little elevation did us no harm, and said we would take up the session again in the evening where we had left off at mid-day. Towards evening I was invited to the concert. At the conclusion, the Prince told me to go to the Princess till her party should be at an end; after that, said he, ‘We will seat ourselves at table, and drink till the candles are burnt out.’ I took the threat for jest, as I knew the Prince was not fond of pleasures of this sort; but when I came to the Princess, she laughed, and assured me to the contrary, and was of opinion that this time I should not escape my fate. Indeed, scarcely had we seated ourselves at supper, when the Prince proposed many toasts, all of which it was necessary to pledge. The exhilaration increased from moment to moment. The ladies took part in it—all restraint was at an end. Some of the gentlemen went out to breathe the fresh air. I was of the number. When I went out I was tolerably steady, but the air somewhat clouded my senses. A great glass of water stood before me on the table. During my absence, the Princess had caused it to be changed for Sillery champagne from which the foam had been blown away. I now no longer well knew what

I drank ; I mixed wine with wine. In order completely to give me what was lacking, the Prince called me to seat myself beside him, and made me empty one glass of Lunelle after another. Every one else was in a similar condition. We overwhelmed the ladies with compliments and tenderness. At last the crown Princess, either by accident or intention, broke a glass. This was the signal for the most extravagant delight. The act seemed to us worthy of imitation ; in a moment all the glasses flew into every corner of the hall, and crystal, porcelain, cups, mirrors, candlesticks and table service were broken into a thousand fragments. In the midst of this horror of desolation the Prince was the only one who looked upon the ruins with a serene, untroubled eye. When, however, the jubilation took the form of a perfect tumult, he withdrew to his room. The Princess disappeared at the same moment. I was so unfortunate as not to find a servant to take compassion on my helplessness. As I groped along, I came to the head of the great staircase, and fell from the top to the bottom, where I remained lying insensible on the lowest step. I should probably have died, had not an old female servant proved my guardian angel. She came accidentally to the spot, and took me in the dark for the great yard-dog. She greeted me with a not very complimentary name, and gave me a hearty kick. When, however, she discovered that I was a man, and a young cavalier of the Court, she opened her heart to milder feelings, and ran for help. My people came and carried me to bed and fetched a doctor, who opened a vein, bound up my wounds, and at last brought me to myself. In the morning they talked of trepanning ; but this alarm was unfounded. I was only obliged to keep my bed for a fortnight, during which time the Prince was so gracious as to visit me daily, and do all he could towards my restoration. The next morning after my mishap the whole castle was mortally ill. Neither the Prince nor any of his gentlemen could make themselves visible, and at dinner the Princess found herself at table without a single courtier in

attendance. This day, which fortunately has few brethren, will be long held in remembrance in Rheinsberg.”

For all comment on this scene, let me remind my readers that since it took place, in 1738, somewhat more than a hundred years have elapsed; yet that a much shorter period has sufficed to bring society to a pitch of refinement which looks back upon such scenes with amazement, since even England, in the early days of the nineteenth century, might furnish episodes not altogether dissimilar to the above-described bacchanalian festival at the Court of the crown Prince and Princess of Prussia.

Seldom, indeed, did similar occurrences break into the classic retirement of Prince Frederic at Rheinsberg.* As Bielefeld states, his mornings were spent in the solitude of his own apartments, generally in his library, which was fitted up in one of the above-mentioned towers, the windows of which overlooked the garden and the lake; no one then knew the manner in which he occupied these precious hours of quiet, but it was afterwards discovered that this was the time wherein he luxuriated in the correspondence which he had commenced with Suhm, D'Argens, Wolff, Rollin, and other men of talent taste and learning; but above all with Voltaire. His admiration for the genius of this author amounted at that time almost to deification; Voltaire's portrait hung above his works in Frederic's library, that he might always be reminded of him.

To the practice of the flute, too, he devoted much time, and much dry labour to the theoretical study of music; his execution on the above-named instrument was that of a master; he never, it is true, acquired much brilliancy in the fingering of rapid passages, and his accompaniment had to humour him in

* He used generally to date his letters "Remusberg." In a letter to Voltaire, dated "Remusberg, April 7th," (1738,) he gives as a reason for this, a tradition that Remus, to escape the anger of his brother Romulus, fled towards the northern provinces of Germany, and there founded a castle, which, certain investigators were of opinion, had formerly occupied the site of Rheinsberg.

these parts ; but his *adagios* were so exquisite that they seldom failed to draw tears from those of his audience who had a soul for music.*

I linger perhaps too long over the sunny days of Rheinsberg, but this was the happiest period of Elizabeth Christina's life. She said herself, "I have never had such happy days as those I have spent here." The man for whom she would have cheerfully sacrificed her life, and did sacrifice her happiness, at least now lived with her as his wife.† He treated her with the greatest respect and consideration—sometimes she might almost persuade herself with affection. He openly avowed that he admired her person ; "that he must be the most unreasonable of men if he did not truly esteem her, for that she was of a remarkably gentle temper ;" "that no one could be more docile ;" that "she was complaisant to excess, forestalling even his wishes in all that could give him pleasure." The idea that, so soon as the crown Prince should become king, he would divorce his gentle consort, began to lose ground amongst the courtiers : Schulenberg,‡ who was supposed to be in his confidence, did nothing but burst into inexhaustible fits of laughter when the subject was mentioned to him. The crown Princess's "influence"§ began to be talked of. "She becomes powerful," || says Seckendorf, on his return from Vienna. "The Prince loves her ;" "he writes to her during short absences ; he has showed her letters as specimens of good sense."

And if in Elizabeth Christina's own heart, there was an aching consciousness of the vast distinction that lay between this chill *almost* of affection, and its warm reality, she sedulously endeavoured to hide that consciousness from the searching eyes of all that were around her. If the bitter tears did rise, when

* See Bielefeld and others.

† The crown Prince and Princess "lived together as man and wife for more than ten years."—*Preuss*, "Lebens Geschichte," Von Hahnke.

‡ Seckendorf.

§ Ibid.

|| Ibid. Il a montré ses lettres à Schulenburg en disant, "Elle a pourtant de bon sens."

her ear failed to catch that tender inflection of her husband's voice for which it had been wistfully listening so long, she forced them down again to their secret fount within her heart, and covered the pain by a smile. She shut her eyes wilfully to all that went on between the crown Prince and the ladies Von Morian, Von Brandt and others, and her ears to the tales that malice would have poured into them. At the same time she occupied herself in the cultivation of her mind, the storing of which had been neglected in her youth; for, at her father's Court, the chief instruction which the young Princes and Princesses received, was derived from listening to the theological discussions of certain learned divines, who met there upon fixed days for the purpose of such discourse, in which both the parents of Elizabeth Christina were interested.* She read with care and selection, and reflected with accuracy upon what she read. La Croze helped her in her selection and study of the best French authors. She read Bayle attentively, because that author was a favourite with her husband, and it gave her pleasure to trace the ideas which communicated pleasure to him.† When men of celebrity visited the Court of Rheinsberg she was an earnest, though a silent listener to their discourse. She quietly formed her own judgment of their characters, and the instinct of her truthful simplicity seldom led her far astray. Her opinions of men and things were never intruded, but they existed none the less strongly in her own mind, and sometimes found a quiet utterance in her moments of social relaxation with Madame de Katsch or her sister, when the latter became Princess of Prussia.

We find that Elizabeth Christina liked and esteemed Lord Baltimore when he visited Berlin in 1739; that she admired Algarotti, but did not accord him the esteem with which she honoured the Englishman; but that, despite his talents, which

* Von Hahnke.

† It used to be said that the Crown Prince and Princess knew Bayle thoroughly, because she studied the parts which had little interest for him, and vice versa.

she could not but admire, she could not endure Voltaire.* The crown Princess also occupied part of her leisure in the use of her pencil. We find, in one of Frederic's letters to his father at this period, that "My wife is at work on a portrait" for "my *allergnädigste* father;" and again we have allusions to the progress of the portrait.

Nor was Elizabeth Christina by any means destitute of loving hearts to appreciate her trials and her efforts; her own family were warmly attached to her, and her father writes to her that her "conduct is angelic." With her father-in-law also, she was high in favour, although it was a great disappointment to him that Fritz should have no heir; she was the mediatrix upon whom Frederic relied in the little misunderstandings which sometimes still arose between him and his father. A constant correspondence was now carried on between Rheinsberg and Postdam, Wusterhausen or Berlin, according to the King's existing place of residence, both by the crown Prince and the Princess. Frequent presents of delicacies from the Prince's garden or kitchen at Rheinsberg were most graciously accepted by his Majesty. A pasty, or even a fat calf, some Muskat-wine, some grapes or melons, some plover's eggs, some lobsters, oysters, or other sea-fish, (for, though Frederic William was fond of such dainties, he could seldom induce himself to be extravagant enough to indulge in them at his own expense,) not unfrequently brought an addition to the usual letter of acknowledgment in the King's own handwriting, such as the

* "My Lord Baltimore is an estimable man; he has my approbation. Madame de Wolden has made a conquest of him. Algarotti is very amusing, and has much knowledge, but what does not please me, is, that he has no religion, and ridicules all that relates to it; he has not my approbation so much as my lord."—*Letter of Eliz. Christina to her brother Prince Ferdinand.*

Denina says Voltaire disgusted her by his "méchancetés" and his "vilainies," as much as he charmed her by his talents.—See Von Hahnke's "Leben der Königin Eliz. Christ."

Nevertheless, when he read his tragedies before the two Queens, during his first visit to Berlin in 1740, both ladies paid the tribute of their tears to the pathos of his verse.

following:—"Ich danke, werde seine Gesundheit trinken." * In return, the Prince acknowledges presents of pheasants, partridges and swans from his father. In 1735 he says, "My wife is much pleased with the beautiful present (a snuff-box) which my most gracious father has sent her."

In the autumn of that year, a great family misfortune befell Elizabeth Christina, in the death of her father. She was at Berlin at the time, and Frederic knowing the trial which the loss would prove to her, and doubtless, knowing also that consolation from his lips would possess more of balm for her grief than from those of any other person, writes to the King from Rüppin, 7th Sept., 1735. "I have received the sad intelligence of the death of my father-in-law; I believe my wife will be much distressed at it; would my most gracious father allow me to come to Berlin to comfort her?"

We have already commented upon the principal public events which took place between the marriage of Frederic and the death of his father, it is needless therefore to revert to them here. The good understanding which had begun to subsist between the King and his successor, amounted, towards the close of the former's life, to a feeling of sincere cordiality, occasionally ruffled a little, it is true, by the King's constitutional tendency to suspicion. Yet the real affection and distress manifested by the crown Prince during the dreadful illness from which Frederic William suffered, as has been stated, on his return from the campaign on the Rhine, in 1734, did much towards a perfect reconciliation. Seckendorf writes on this occasion†—"The Prince Royal is truly touched by the situation of the King, has his eyes always full of water, and has wept his eyes out of his head; has refined to contrive a comfortable bed for the King; will not leave Potsdam; the King has forced him to do so; may not come again before Saturday afternoon;

* I thank him, will drink his health.

† 4th Oct. Le Prince Royal est véritablement attendri par la situation du roi : hat die Augen immer voll Wasser, und hat die Augen ganz aus dem Kopf ge-

says I would give an arm to prolong the King's life twenty years, if he would let me live according to my fancy."

Surely there was but little of the heartlessness with which so many writers have charged Frederic, in the man who "weeps his eyes out of his head" at witnessing the sufferings of the sick father whom he is to succeed, and who employs his great intellect in "refining," to provide him such a bed as may relieve those sufferings?

After Frederic William's recovery from this attack, he visited the crown Prince and Princess at Rheinsberg; he was entertained with great ceremony, and before taking leave he expressed to his daughter-in-law his gracious satisfaction both with his hosts and entertainment, though a somewhat disagreeable idea of the "expense" of his son's luxurious little abode does seem to have crossed his mind; but Fritzchen's regiment was in first-rate order, and splendidly disciplined and accoutred; and when, rather with the hope of catching the Prince's diligence napping in this respect, the King set off in the middle of the night to be at Rüppin by daybreak, whom should he behold, on entering the parade-ground prepared to find no one stirring, but Fritzchen himself, exercising his very finest soldiers in the very finest style. It is rumoured that a friendly hand had forewarned him of the intended visit; nevertheless, this incident warmed Frederic William's heart towards his son, perhaps still more than the latter's tenderness during his illness; he even began to think of allowing him an extra supply for his expenditure, and not before it was wanted did this reinforcement arrive, for the enlistment of tall recruits, &c. had terribly exhausted Frederic's purse, and he was in great perplexity for money; he confessed to Manteufel, who then

weint, hat raffinirt, um dem König ein commoden Belt zu schaffen; hat von Potsdam nicht weggehen wollen; le roi l'y a forcé: soll erst Sonnabends Nachmittag wieder kommen; dit, "Je donnerai un bras pour faire prolonger sa vie de vingt ans, pourvu que le roi me fasse vivre à ma fantaisie."—*Seckendorf's "Journal Secret."*

enjoyed a good deal of his confidence—and betrayed it, that he sometimes had not a crown in his pocket; that he was obliged to spend as much as fifty thousand crowns a year in presents to the King's immediate servants, to secure their good offices with his father. "If I die," said he, "those who survive me must pay my debts, which will make them weep in good earnest."* In the year 1736 a misunderstanding with the King seems to have arisen on this account, for Seckendorf writes that 'Junior'† "a le cœur ulceré contre le Roi." Frederic's health also was at this time in a very precarious state; the same author says, "Biberius (Grumbkow) does not think Junior will survive Vitellius (the King), but that pessimus Wilhelmus (Prince William) will succeed some day." The terrible headaches, accompanied by vomiting, from which he suffered at that time, appear to have given serious grounds for the idea, and the Prince began himself to think that there might be some truth in the prophecy concerning Frederic William's successor contained in the "Vaticinium leninense."‡ He appears also to have had several attacks of intermittent fever, at intervals, during the ensuing years.

But despite any slight occasional differences between the King and the crown Prince, a considerable amount of real confidence, esteem and affection seems by degrees to have grown up, and always, henceforward, to have subsisted unshaken between the father and son, until the death of the former. It is pleasant to trace the gradual increase of these mutual sentiments in their intercourse. As Frederic's judgment matured, the salutary results of his father's really wise measures and administration, filled him with respect for the man whom he had, naturally, hitherto regarded as little better

* Seckendorf.

† The Crown Prince's *soubriquet* in Seckendorf's "Journal Secret."

‡ A Latin doggerel, composed by a monk named Hermann, of Lenyn, containing a sort of prophetic history of the kings of Prussia.

than an arbitrary tyrant. Speaking of his father, he thus writes to a friend, "All that I see praiseworthy (in him) fills me with an inward delight which I can scarcely conceal ; I feel the emotions of filial love doubled within me, when I observe such wise, such true views in the author of my existence." Frederic William likewise, on his side, began to conceive, that possibly the science and philosophy for which his son, who, he had discovered, was certainly no fool, had such a reverence, might deserve a little more consideration than he had hitherto bestowed upon them ; he spoke approvingly of their cultivation, and even,—a crowning mark of his respect for his son's opinion, began to study Wolff himself ! " The crown Prince writes upon this occasion : " The novelties of the day are, that the King read's Wolff's philosophy for three hours daily ; wherefore God be praised ! We have indeed arrived at a triumph of wisdom.*

Towards the end of 1739, the King's shattered health once more entirely gave way ; his complaint, water on the chest, gained ground rapidly ; he rallied again in the beginning of the year 1740, but it was only for a time. The crown Prince, had offended him involuntarily, and was in a sort of disgrace at Rheinsberg. On the 26th of May, he was sent for by the Queen, who added to her message however, the injunction, that he should appear to have come from a mere impulse of affection, and not with the idea of finding his father worse. The Prince started in all haste ; but, contrary to expectation, his father was slightly better on his arrival. He had ordered Bielefeld to remain at Rheinsberg, to attend the Princess during his absence, and, consequently, we have his description of the anxiety and suspense which prevailed there, during the time which elapsed before the King's death ; for it was known that he could not survive, and that his end was hourly expected. The rumble of every waggon that passed over the wooden bridge leading from the high road, was construed into the

* Kügler, "Geschichte Fried. des Grossen."

rattle of the wheels of a carriage, every ox or ass seen in the distance was ennobled into the horse of the Prince's courier, and a general rush was made to the windows.

The crown Princess was the only person who preserved a constant equanimity, or "at least the external appearance of it." "Five intolerable days passed in this manner, we thought a new Joshua had made the sun stand still. On the evening of Friday the 31st, we were all sitting together at cards, when the first gentleman of the chamber entered, with a great letter sealed with black: we thought that the King was certainly dead, and all threw down our cards, the game was now despised. Brand rose, took his hat, and said, "I am the first to call the Princess Queen, and I will pronounce the word 'Majesty' with becoming unction. We slowly approached the open door of the cabinet where the Princess was also engaged at cards. She was reading her letter, but looked up immediately on our entrance, and asked, surprised, why we had left our game? We stood ashamed; she smiled at our perplexity. At supper we joked together, and congratulated ourselves that the King did not know our sensations; finally we all became very cheerful, and the Princess also, till she rose towards midnight, and every one retired to his room."

About two o'clock the Baron was roused by Knobelsdorf, who came to say that the King was dead. He expressed some incredulity, but Knobelsdorf assured him "that there was no mistake this time, for Wylich had come to bring the Princess a message, and that Jordan* had received his orders to embalm the King, and you know that no one who comes under his hands returns to life again." When a light was brought Bielefeld jumped out of bed, and began picking up some small change which his friend had knocked off the table in the dark. "Don't stay there picking up halfpence," said Knobelsdorf, "when ducats will soon shower upon us." On entering the Princess's ante-room, Bielefeld found Baron Wylich surrounded by the

* The royal embalmer.

Princess's ladies, and recounting to them the last scenes of the King's life. He had brought directions for the new Queen to follow her husband to Berlin, whither he was going immediately. There was a discussion which of the ladies should rouse Elizabeth Christina from her slumbers, to inform her of her new accession of dignity; at length Madame de Katsch commissioned the Demoiselle von Bortefeld, the first lady of the bedchamber, to do so. "She stepped into the chamber of the sleeping Queen, and softly undrew the curtains; the Princess asked what was the cause of the disturbance. "Forgive me, your Majesty, that I come so early, but——" "Why do you call me 'your Majesty?' are you dreaming?" "No, your Majesty; but Baron Wylich is come with intelligence of the King's death." Madame von Katsch then entered, and presented a sedative draught, whilst she greeted the new Queen by her title. In about half-an-hour the Queen appeared in a black and white dressing-gown; I thought I had never seen her look so beautiful before; we all tendered her our short, but hearty congratulations." It was agreed that the young Queen and her attendants should not set off for Berlin till after breakfast, as it was necessary to send intelligence on before, eighty horses being required at every station, and these relays being difficult to obtain owing to the scarcity of the preceding winter, which had impoverished the peasants who furnished them. At that breakfast "the cook surpassed himself." Madame de Katsch told Bielefeld to propose the health of the new Queen, but his feelings overcame him, and he could "only stammer a few words" of congratulation to the young mistress on whom he looked with so much respectful attachment; the Queen, too, was moved, and assured her kindly attendants of her continued friendship.

The King had taken up his residence unexpectedly at Charlottenburg. When Bielefeld saw him he appeared to be in a very depressed state. He replied to the Baron's congratulations by saying, "You do not know what I have lost in my father." Bielefeld replied that the gain of a kingdom might

make up for heavy losses. Frederic smiled faintly, but did not reply.

And now on every tongue trembled the unuttered question—Would King Frederic divorce his young Queen? He had avowed that his marriage was the price of his freedom. Now that he was his own master, would he not hasten to dissolve it? This question was soon set at rest. On the first public day he presented Elizabeth Christina to the assembled Court with the words, “I present you your Queen.” Some accounts relate that he embraced and kissed her very tenderly on this occasion; and a letter has been published as having been sent by him to his wife, stating that he had indeed married her compulsorily, but that her character and conduct had won his affection and esteem, and that he called upon her with joy to share his kingdom. However this might be, Elizabeth Christina was now formally recognised as Queen of Prussia; but, alas! she saw herself at the same time divested of the only realm she coveted, that of the heart of her husband, whilst before her lay the blank and dreary prospect of a widowed life and an empty title.

There was a general feeling of disappointment on the accession of Frederic; he did not do anything that any one expected of him: his friends expected to be rained on by a golden shower—and very moderate appointments marked his sense of their merits and services; his enemies expected disgrace and resentment—and he behaved as if he had no enemies; the covetous expected to extort office and riches from his inexperience—and they were rebuffed with a polished but cutting rebuke; his mother thought to rule—and he sported, gently indeed, but unmistakably, with her ambition. Every one had some charge against him: he was “avaricious,” he was “ungrateful,” “suspicious,” “revengeful,” “capricious,” &c. &c.; the Queen was required to employ her gentle arts as peacemaker in the family and Court.

The most incomprehensible part of Frederic’s conduct, however, was his behaviour towards those persons who had befriended

him during his imprisonment, and who had even suffered on his account. The Von Wrechs were in a kind of disgrace during the whole of his reign, and the debt he had contracted to them while at Küstrin remained unliquidated after his accession. Doris Ritter, too, was allowed to remain in obscurity. Historians have endeavoured to account for this mystery in various ways; some have apologised for Frederic's apparent ingratitude by alleging that his strict adherence to the laws of his country caused him to repudiate, as king, the debts which he had illegally contracted as crown Prince.* But this is villainous sophistry to excuse the non-payment of a debt; and as yet, at least, he had not wholly sacrificed principle to interest and ambition, nor offered up his human heart at the shrine of deified reason and philosophy.

In Frederic's character there were elements, apparent enough in his youth, which, had they only been duly wrought out in his education, might have led to a far truer greatness than that which he attained. But his father had no mental gauge by which to appreciate his son's qualities; and his tyrannical injustice, though endured with a degree of filial forbearance that is astonishing and admirable, threw the young man back on himself, and fostered his inherent selfishness until it became a dominant passion.† His favourite tutor Duhan, also, who had most influence over him, was unfortunately lax in his Christianity; Frederic's matured intellect, great as it was in some respects, was all insufficient by its own unaided "searching to find out God," and therefore, instead of becoming the noble Christian man and hero that he might have been, he contented himself with being the paltry attempt at a heathen phi-

* His father had made a law at, or, about the time of his son's arrest, to prohibit the lending of money to any of the Princes Royal, and to declare null all debts already so contracted.

† A striking change was noticed even in his appearance, after Katt's execution; his nature seemed to become harder all at once. Hille wrote to Grumbkow,— "June 5th, 1731. Your Excellency will find him greatly altered; his step is firm and easy. I no longer remark that *air de marquis* which was formerly apparent in his manner."

losopher which he really was—a character whose pitiful meanness provokes our disgust, almost at the very moment when its greatness is exciting our admiration.

The motive, then, of his strange conduct towards some of those persons who had formerly been his friends, never has been, and probably never will be, satisfactorily explained. There had been an intrigue between him and the young Frau von Wrech. Possibly the judgment of his riper years may have questioned the views of the family in not discouraging his advances to her. Nevertheless, even in this case, the injustice of leaving undischarged a debt so contracted, and which certainly should have been binding upon a man of honour, must still rest upon Frederic's memory.

He seemed, indeed, after his accession, to wish to bury this portion of his existence altogether in oblivion. General Spaen, one of the tall guards who had been in his confidence in 1730, and had undergone cassation and arrest in consequence, entertained Frederic the Great at his house in 1763. The King was very gracious, and reverted to the associations of his youth, but never once mentioned the occurrence of that unhappy period when they had last met. Spaen said in reference to this—"The King had an excellent memory up to the year 1730." There were some few exceptions to his conduct towards those friends of his youth who had been connected with the circumstances of his disgrace. Keith, who had taken refuge in England, and been employed on foreign military service by that Power, in order to evade the demand of the King of Prussia for his surrender, was recalled on Frederic's succession, and appointed to the office of Stallmeister. Duhan, too, was treated with unvarying affection and respect.

But to return to the course of events under the new administration. The news of the death of the Emperor Charles VI. reached Berlin on the 26th of October.* The King was at

* The year 1740 was marked by the death of three sovereigns, viz. Frederic William of Prussia, Charles VI. of Austria, and Anne of Russia.

Rheinsberg at the time, suffering from an attack of intermittent fever. But despite the debilitating effects of illness, he formed a rapid and masterly plan of operations, and proceeded to act upon it without delay.

Amongst the alleged causes by which Frederic II. was actuated in the undertaking he commenced on the death of the Emperor, the following were the principal :—

Allusions have frequently been made in the course of the preceding narrative, to the succession of Juliers and Berg, which was contested, in 1609, by the Elector, John Sigismund, and the Pfalzgraf of Neuburg, and finally fell to the share of the latter. The claim of the house of Brandenburg to this inheritance was again asserted by Frederic William I. on the ultimate succession again becoming open by the failure of direct heirs to the last Pfalzgraf. The Emperor had lured him into giving his assent to the Pragmatic Sanction in 1726, by holding this tempting bait before his eyes, and despite his faithful adherence to the imperial cause, he had felt the non-fulfilment of this promise a sore grievance; and when, alarmed at the triumphs of the French in the commencement of the war of the succession of Poland, the Emperor hastily made peace with France without reference to Prussia, Frederic William's wrath waxed hot against the imperial ingratitude, and pointing to his successor, he exclaimed—"There stands one who will avenge me." Thus, as Manteufel remarked, the King of Prussia, like King David, forgave all his enemies before his death,—on condition that his son should punish them after it.*

But this was not the only grievance urged by Prussia against Austria. Several principalities in the province of Silesia had, from time to time, devolved by collateral succession upon the Electors of Brandenburg, and the Emperors of Aus-

* Seckendorfs "Journal Secret." Le diable (Manteufel) dit que le Roi de Prusse ressemble au Roi David, lequel, étant sur le lit de mort, dit, "Je pardonne à tous mes ennemis, espérant que mon fils les châtierà."

tria had as often found pretexts for avoiding their investiture into these estates.

Being in need of the services of the great Elector, the Emperor then reigning, offered him the Circle of Schwiebus as a *quasi* equivalent for the Principalities which were claimed by him; his son Frederic III. had been induced to restore this domain, by a privately-contracted treaty, on condition of receiving the imperial support. Conceiving himself afterwards to have been overreached, although he did not reclaim the possession, he left the affair as a hereditary injury, to be redressed by his posterity.*

Certainly, Frederic's was not a mind upon which hereditary bequests of vengeance were likely to be particularly binding, but he by no means disdained to make use of them as a handle. When, therefore, the news of the Emperor's death reached him, his plan was clearly and instantly developed in his mind; probably its outlines had existed there long before. It was a moment in which, the succession having devolved upon a young and inexperienced woman, whose husband "deserved the praise of amiable qualities, rather than of commanding talents,† a rapid swoop would put him at once in possession, not only of redress for his father's and grandfather's grievances, but what was far more to the purpose, of a valuable acquisition of territory. The chivalry of his attack upon the dominions of the young Empress Queen, who was altogether unsuspecting of aggression on the part of Prussia, her father's tried ally, who had expressly sanctioned her right to ascend the throne, is altogether another question. It was the move of a masterly and energetic mind, but not of a noble or magnanimous one.

Both friends and destined enemies were long uncertain as to what aim Frederic's rapid preparations for war might tend. The lands of Juliers and Berg seemed the most tangible

* Kugler's "Geschichte Fried. des Grossen."

† Mahon's England.

object of attack, but an attempt on the garrisoned district of the Rhine would have been too rash. M. Botta, the imperial envoy, when a tendency to an accumulation of troops on the Silesian frontier became manifest, threw out, as a sort of feeler, the remark, that the roads in that district of the empire were in a frightful state, and Frederic drily replied, "then one would bemire oneself in traversing them." When his object did become apparent, the pretensions of the "Elector of Brandenburg" were considered too absurd to meet with anything but ridicule at Vienna.

On the 13th of December, 1740, there was a grand masked ball at the castle at Berlin; the two Queens were present, and so was the King; the masks hid many an anxious face that night. Frederic left the room unremarked amongst the crowd, and with the sounds of music and revelry accompanying his departure, took leave of Berlin on his first campaign.

There was no hostile army to encounter on his march, the Protestant inhabitants of Silesia gladly hailed the appearance of a Protestant monarch; the towns, with few exceptions, joyfully opened their gates; at Grüneberg, the first town of note to which the Prussians came, the scene of their admission was a perfect comedy.* At Breslau they were received with acclamation and festivity; Frederic himself opened a grand ball with one of the principal ladies of the place, two days after his entry. All the female part of the population espoused the cause of the gallant young King and his magnificent army, with enthusiasm; marriages and love affairs were the order of the day. Bielefeld relates, that one day, as he was standing at the door conversing with his banker, a young and very pretty woman passed, weeping bitterly. Herr D——, who knew her, inquired the cause of her grief: after a little coy hesi-

* The commanding officer shut the gates, and told Frederic's officer that he declined to give him the keys; "but," said he, "there they lie upon the table: if you *take* them, it is a different affair!"

tation she replied, "I am married to a fusilier of the Munchau regiment, and if I had only waited a week longer I might have had a guard of six feet two!"

Place after place submitted in like manner; from Ottmachau Frederick writes to his friend Jordan, in exuberant spirits at his rapid success. "My dear Herr Jordan, my sweet Herr Jordan, my good—my mild—my peace-loving—my all-affable Herr Jordan, I inform thy serenity that Silesia is as good as conquered."

Meantime a lively correspondence was maintained between him and his Queen; few days passed without a despatch from head-quarters, and the subjects treated of at this time appear to have been of considerable importance. The Queen's brother, Anthony Ulric, was married to Anne of Mecklenburg, the niece of the Empress, Anne of Russia, and their young son Iwan, was proclaimed Emperor under the regency of his father, upon the Empress's death. Frederic was desirous of securing the Russian alliance, and he made use of his wife's mediation with her brother for this purpose. In a letter dated Ottmachau, 12th Jan. 1741, he thanks her for the "manner and the matter of the letter to her brother Anton," which he had begged her to write; he concludes his letter with the words, "God give you health and prosperity, I hope soon again to see you in good health, and to reiterate the assurances of the perfect tenderness with which I am," &c. &c. On the 21st of the same month he writes—"You give me great pleasure by marking the manner in which you have written to the Duke Anthony; I begin already to feel the effects of his friendship, and I doubt not that things will go as well as possible if you will take the trouble to cultivate these good dispositions. Our affairs prosper here. I have finished the campaign, and now the only question is about winter quarters. I expect to be in Berlin about the 5th or 6th of February, when I hope to have the pleasure of embracing you—wholly yours, Frederic." Even before that time, however, Frederic was again in his

capital, the object of his rapid movement, for the moment, effectually obtained.

The news of this unheard-of undertaking was received with astonishment, mingled with indignation, by the Courts both of Vienna and London. Even the Pope was dismayed by the intelligence of so many of the orthodox creed having fallen into the hands of a heretic; Frederic's edicts of toleration, however, quieted the alarm of the holy see. Graf Gotter's negotiation having failed in inducing Frederic to give up his newly-acquired territory, the Austrian army, towards the end of February, advanced upon Silesia. That of the Prussian monarch prepared for the approaching contest. For a moment the fate of Silesia and the young fame of Frederic seemed trembling in the doubtful balance, at the battle of Möllwitz. The hero of so many fields of desperate fight fled like a very coward from his first, and received, as a defeated fugitive, the news of a victory gained by his general, not by himself. The attack of the French and Bavarian army now obliged the young Empress Queen to listen to overtures of accommodation. Unwillingly, indignantly enough, indeed, was the cession of Silesia agreed to, but agreed to it was; and Frederic received the homage of the Princes and Stände of the Duchy of Silesia at Breslau, on the 4th of November of the same year. The old imperial throne was used for the ceremony, and like a ludicrous caricature of the facility with which, from an Austrian, Silesia became a Prussian province, the double imperial eagle embroidered upon it speedily became the ensign of the Prussian royalty, by the amputation of one of its heads!

The coronation of the Duke of Bavaria as Charles VII. Emperor of Germany, took place in the beginning of the next year. The position of the young Empress Queen raised a deep feeling of sympathy in every manly bosom amongst her subjects; that deep-hearted shout of her Hungarian liegemen, "*Moriamur pro rege nostro Maria Theresa*" went thrilling through the land. Part of the French Bavarian army was

driven from Austria. Frederic began to fear Maria Theresa was becoming too powerful; he took the field again in conjunction with Saxony, whose sluggish monarch his superior energy had forced into unwilling action.

During the April encampment at Chrudim, letters of high importance were again constantly passing between Frederic and his Queen; hints of a plot for his assassination had excited in her mind a fearful amount of anxiety respecting his safety; she wrote to apprise him of her fears, and of the cause of them; he seems to have thought the affair not devoid of foundation, but begs her in his reply, dated 21st April, Chrudim, "to keep the thing secret until it be *àpropos* for me to bring it to light." Again, in relation to the same subject, he writes to her from the camp of Brezezi, 25th May, 1742, "Il faut vous aimer lorsqu'on vous connait, et la bonté de votre cœur merite qu'on l'estime." "I am infinitely obliged to you for the pains you take to fathom the truth of the intelligence that has been reported to you; but you may be free from anxiety, the Austrians are so beaten and discouraged, that they certainly think of anything rather than assassinations and conspiracies." This letter was written shortly after the battle of Czaslau or Chotusitz, which led to the triumphant peace of Breslau. From the camp at Kuttenberg he writes again on the 22nd of June, to announce to her the conclusion of peace which was proclaimed on the 30th of the same month. Yet one more letter informs her that she is soon to have the satisfaction of greeting her hero unharmed from the field of his fame; and deeper and more solemn even, than the feelings of thankfulness with which she had listened to the grand, jubilant swell of the *Te Deum*, after the battle of Möllwitz, were the thanksgivings now offered up by Elizabeth Christina at the footstool of the God of battles.

Frederic's reception at Berlin on the 12th of July was an occasion of the most sincere rejoicing. The inhabitants of Berlin thronged out of the city to meet their young monarch.

The delight of the Queen Mother was loud and exultant ; that of the Queen regnant, deep, tremulous and silent. The King was in high spirits ; gay scenes and happy faces met the eye on every side ; it was a moment of common and heartfelt gladness both for Prince and people.

The marriage of Frederic's brother, Prince William, with the sister of Elizabeth Christina, was the cause not only of much festivity at Court, but also of very great pleasure to the young Queen, since it would place in her immediate proximity a sister, between whom and herself there existed the warmest affection. The Princess Louisa Amelia was not so handsome as the Queen, but she was distinguished by an amiability of character and a degree of good sense, which gained her the sincere esteem of all who knew her, especially that of her brother-in-law the King.

At this wedding Baron Bielefeld was deputed by Frederic to compose and deliver a speech upon the comic investiture of the bride with the "Straw Crown." Nervous as he was at this essay in public speaking before so distinguished an audience, Bielefeld nevertheless acquitted himself with *éclat*. He gives us a description of all the prominent parties at the subsequent ball, and of their dress. The King, in silver cloth and epaulettes, looked "youthful and handsome ;" but the Queen, who was attired in green velvet, with bouquets of brilliants enriching the train, brilliant-pins fastening her hair, and one large diamond, like a star, on her forehead, was the figure which most captivated his attention, and he somewhat tritely describes her toilette as having been arranged by "all the handmaid graces."

But the days of Elizabeth Christina's happiness had flown swiftly by in the old times of Rheinsberg. A letter written to her favourite brother Ferdinand, whilst the title of "Queen" yet sounded strange to her ear, speaks of intrigues which disturbed her peace ; and every year as it passed was marked by more and more estrangement on the part of her husband. Nevertheless, in the year 1744, he celebrated, in her apartments,

the birthday of the Princess of Prussia, (Prince William had taken the title of Prince of Prussia since his brother had given up all hopes of an heir,) and this, says his Queen, in her confidential correspondence with the same brother, caused great jealousy in other parts of the family.

In the month of July, the same year, Frederic cemented his alliance with Sweden by the marriage of his fair sister Ulrica with the heir to the crown of that country. Prince William acted as the representative of the Swedish Prince upon this occasion. The Princess Ulrica, covered with Swedish diamonds,* was a very fair as well as a glittering bride, and the King, in gallant array of blue and silver, gave her away. The royal family delayed the departure of this cherished member as long as possible. Fête upon fête was given; but the inevitable day of separation at last arrived. There was an opera that night, which the King had arranged, to distract in some degree the grief of parting. The Princess in her travelling dress, "fair as the wakening day,"† was present, with her mother and the other members of her family; when, in the midst of the second act, her young brother, Prince Ferdinand, threw his arms round her neck, exclaiming, "Oh, my dear Ulrica, I shall never see you any more!" she clasped the boy to her bosom, and burst into a passion of tears, whilst the uncontrollable sobs of the rest of the party broke sadly upon the music of the piece, and called forth answering emotions in the hearts of most of the spectators.

At the moment of parting, when his sister sank half-fainting in Frederic's arms, the tears gushed from his eyes, and he turned away with a heavy heart as she was placed in the carriage. What a change had come over the brother and sister before they met again in the same place, both advanced in years, and he scheming to prevent her staying too long at the home of her youth!

* Bielefeld. The collective value of the diamonds worn by the bride and the two Queens on this occasion, was estimated at 8,000,000 Thalers.—*Von Hahnke*.

† Bielefeld.

The advantages gained by Maria Theresa over the Emperor Charles VII., having induced the King of Prussia to ally himself with France in defence of that Prince, shortly after the marriage of the Princess Ulrica. Frederic once more took the field. The news of the birth of an heir to the Prince of Prussia, which reached him in camp at Tabor, greatly rejoiced him. Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick wrote to his sister, the Queen, "that the joy and satisfaction of the master was visible in his face" when he heard of it. At the close of an unsuccessful campaign he placed his army in winter-quarters and returned to Berlin. The alliance concluded by England, Austria, Holland and Saxony, at the commencement of the next year, 1745; the death of the Emperor Charles, the cession of his claims by his heir, and the more than doubtful character of the friendship of France, placed Prussia in a somewhat critical position, but she had a dauntless pilot at the helm. Frederic knew that he had made a bitter enemy of Maria Theresa; neither was the purport of that famous passage in George the Second's letter to her—"Madam, that which is good to take is also good to restore,"—lost upon him. He bent all his energies to the task which lay before him; the great silver lustres of the apartments so massively furnished by Frederick William were melted to furnish money, and all other needful preparations rapidly made. On the 15th of March, 1745, Frederic once more left the capital to try the doubtful chances of war.

Before the commencement of actual operations in the ensuing campaign, the King paid a short visit to his capital; the Queen Mother, the Princess Amelia, his three brothers, and the Princess of Prussia, were invited to visit him at Rheinsberg. The Queen regnant alone was excluded from the family party, and bitterly did she feel this exclusion. This was the first very marked instance of neglect which she had met with from her husband; in after years she was doomed to suffer from many such instances. She writes to Prince Ferdinand, "I shall be left all alone here in the old castle, like a true prisoner, whilst

the others are enjoying themselves. I amuse myself with reading, work, and music, and it is a great *jour de fête* with me when your letters arrive, it puts me in a good-humour for all day." It is sad to read the effort at gaiety with which she writes, that, "not to be the only stay-at-home," she had planned a little excursion with her ladies to Köpenick. Her lonely sojourn at Berlin, however, at least served to tranquillize the minds of the inhabitants, who were alarmed at the approach of war. The departure of the Queen Mother had added to the popular depression; she had travelled with a larger train than usual, for she was in great exultation at the invitation to Rheinsberg; neither was the exclusion of her daughter-in-law a source of regret to her; a report was spread abroad that she had taken flight, the capital being in danger, and that the Queen was about to follow. Hearing of the panic which prevailed in the streets, Elizabeth Christina immediately went forth to show herself in public, and her appearance amongst them sufficed to calm the terrors of the populace. The campaign which ensued, brought to her various causes of anxiety. Besides the husband whom she still idolized, despite his growing alienation, she had other valuable stakes in the great game of war. Four of her brothers fought on the side of her husband, and one on that of the Austrians;* consequently, the despatches from the army were looked for by her with intense and painful interest. She received the intelligence of her husband's narrow escape from captivity at Camenz,† and of the great victory of Hohenfriedberg with feelings of deep thankfulness; but the Prussian conquest at Sorr was dearly bought for the Queen, since it cost the life of her young brother Albert; the blow, too, was made heavier, that it fell, softened by no tenderness on the part of her hus-

* Kugler.

† Frederic escaped the Austrian soldiers sent to take him captive at this place, only by adopting the ecclesiastical garb and assisting in the performance of mass. In commemoration of the fidelity of the abbot, Tobias Stusche, he presented him with a rich set of ecclesiastical robes. The abbot had the Prussian eagle embroidered upon them, and wore them first on Frederic's name-day.—See Kugler's "Geschichte Fried. des Grossen."

band. The rash conduct of the Prince had excited his displeasure, even the death of the unfortunate young man seemed scarcely to mitigate his resentment; he did not write at all to his Queen at first, and when he did so afterwards, it was in cold, unsympathizing terms, which did but lacerate the wound she had received. "I pity and regret the dead," says his letter; "I deplore the death of your brother Albert, but he incurred his fate from rashness, and without necessity; I pity you, Madam, but there are events for which there is no remedy." Even the gentle heart of Elizabeth Christina resented this unkindness to the dead; she could not forgive the harshness of her husband's judgment; but on hearing that he had spoken kindly and sympathizingly on the subject to her brother Charles, the reigning Duke of Brunswick Bevern, she was but too happy to believe she had wronged his feelings, and she greeted his return to Berlin with delight when it took place, in October.

On her birthday, too, the 8th of November, she notices with a pleasure which shows how any trifling mark of kindness from the King was treasured by her, that he had sent her two pieces of stuff early in the morning, as a present; on that day, also, the banners which had been taken at Hohenfriedberg and Sorr, were hung up in the churches. On that same day secret intelligence was brought to Frederic that the Austrians and Saxons were about to make an attack upon the Mark itself. Like a skilful chess-player, who diverts a threatened attack at home by an unexpected irruption into the heart of his opponent's board, Frederic, whilst apparently only guarding his own frontiers, despatched the hardy veteran Anhalt into the very neighbourhood of Dresden, whilst he himself appeared unexpectedly in Lausitz.

These daring movements left his capital, indeed, unguarded, save by the citizens, who endeavoured to repair the fortifications of the city, if such they could be called. Meanwhile the inhabitants were in great and well-founded consternation: news was brought that the Austrian general lay encamped within

three days' march. The archives were removed to a place of greater security: the inhabitants of the suburbs crowded into the town; the inhabitants of the town fled into the country; horses could scarcely be obtained on any terms; the streets were crowded with carriages vainly awaiting the means of locomotion. "Three deadly long days were thus spent, whilst every moment brought worse news," says Bielefeld.* Suspense had reached its height, and the general depression was extreme, when the news of the victory at Catholic Hennersdorf suddenly changed the whole aspect of affairs. The two Queens had held themselves prepared for flight at any moment; the news of the victory arrived whilst the Queen Mother was supping with Elizabeth Christina. "We have not passed an evening so contentedly for very long," writes the latter on the 17th of December.

The battle of Hennersdorf was speedily succeeded by that of Kesselsdorf, where that old lion of war, the Prince of Anhalt-Dessau, gave one more brilliant proof that "Anhalt les Moustaches" was, though older, no way less vigorous and fiery than when he had joyfully led his troops to victory in the days of his youth.

The conclusion of the peace of Dresden, after this short but brilliant campaign, which terminated the second Silesian war, left Frederic once more at liberty to return to Berlin. On the 28th of December the whole town was in a state of joyful commotion; the inhabitants lined the road by which he was to approach for miles; cries of "Long live Frederic the Great" saluted the conqueror, and the tenderest of greetings awaited him from mother and wife. There was a general illumination, and the whole population was afloat in the glittering streets, which resounded with music and jubilation; no one thought of retiring to repose. But Frederic visited a very different scene that night; his old preceptor, Duhan, lay dying, and the young King stood beside his bed in the chamber of death, strangely

* Now Prince Ferdinand's tutor.

lighted by the illuminations from without, to bid a long farewell to the friend of both his youth and manhood.

This scene cast a gloom over Frederic's return. He had already lost, in the course of the year, two of his most cherished friends, Jordan and Kaiserling : he had written to Duhan himself, shortly before, that in them he had lost "his family," that he was "widowed and orphaned," and he entreated him to be careful of his health, for he was the last of his circle of friends. Strange, that in his "heart-sorrow,"* he should not have turned to the heart that was aching to bestow its sympathies, yearning but for leave to speak one little word of comfort, and asking nothing in return ; but Frederic the Great preferred turning, for consolation and sympathy, to a set of wretched, little, pampered lap-dogs, instead of to a true-hearted and loving, though neglected wife. Verily, Frederic the Great had his reward !

During the eleven years of tranquillity which followed the peace of Dresden, Frederic sedulously attended to the improvement of his kingdom, particularly of the conquered province of Silesia, which he regarded with especial affection, and which soon repaid his care by assuming the appearance of a blooming garden, and adding richly to the resources of the treasury.

To supply the place of his "beloved solitude" of Rheinsberg, which he had presented to his brother Henry, Frederic built himself a castle in the royal Weinberge, near Potsdam. He borrowed the conceit of the name "Sorgefrei," which one of his friends had given to his own country residence, and applied it to this new palace. But the monarch of Prussia had stirred up a political hornet's-nest when he seized Silesia, and Sans-souci was not very likely to furnish its inmate with the calm which its name ostentatiously announced. Here, however, he indulged, at least, in the enlightened society which was his greatest enjoyment, literary and learned men once more surrounded him.† The Marquis D'Argens came to live in Berlin.

* See Frederic's letter to Duhan.

† Frederic wrote to Voltaire shortly after his accession, June 27, 1740, "I

Voltaire had already twice visited that city ; he now accepted honorary office from Frederic, and took up his residence there. For a time he was constantly in the society of the King, who said he would add to his name, as the most honoured of his titles, that of "proprietor of Voltaire." But no real friendship could subsist between men who were both exceedingly selfish, both egregiously vain, and both literary. Besides, Voltaire was greedy, and his Prussian Majesty was becoming parsimonious.

Frederic always wrote in French, but he was not thoroughly master of the French language, either in style, grammar, or orthography. He wrote multifarious French verses, not because nature had made him a poet,* but his manner of thought was artificial in many respects, and he saw no objection to an artificial style of poetry. Voltaire was employed to correct and revise these effusions, as well as the severer labours of Frederic's pen ; sometimes he could not fail to find the royal Pegasus but a very sorry jade ; he condescended to flatter the King upon his poetry, but he spoke contemptuously of it to others. Unfortunately, an expression which he allowed himself to use to an author who requested him to read his unpublished work, that he "had not time, for he had the King's *linge sale à blanchir*," † was repeated to Frederic, and it was never either forgotten or forgiven. But his quarrel with the naturalist Maupertuis,—like-

have laid the foundations of our new academy ; I have made the acquisition of Wolff, Maupertuis, and Algarotti. I await the answer of Gravesende, of Vaucanson, and Euler." — *Recueil des Lettres de M. de Voltaire et du Roi de Prusse*.

* Frederic informs Voltaire, in his correspondence, that a young and beautiful woman first taught him, in his youth, both to love and to make verses.—*Ibid*.

† See Formey's "Mémoires d'un Citoyen." He is no friend to Voltaire, and gives this and a variety of other anecdotes in detail. Voltaire denied having ever used the expression ; in a letter to the King of Prussia, dated Ferney, Aug. 20, speaking of Maupertuis, he says :—"J'ai toujours sur le cœur le mal irréparable qu'il m'a fait : je ne penserai jamais à la calomnie du linge donné à blanchir à la blanchisseuse, à cette calomnie insipide qui m'a été mortelle, et à tout ce qui s'en est suivi, qu'avec une douleur qui m'empoisonnera mes derniers jours."

wise an importation of French learning, whom Frederic had appointed President of the renovated and remodelled Academy of Sciences—was the immediate cause of Voltaire's rupture with the King of Prussia, inasmuch as he persisted in publishing his "Dr. Akakia" (a bitter satire upon Maupertuis), despite his promise to Frederic to suppress it.* I will not stay to tell how, on the cooling of their intimacy, the King, displeased with Voltaire's continual complaints of his supplies of coffee, candles, &c., stopped them. How Voltaire, in reprisals, descended from his room to steal the candles from the lustres,† and so on. Who would have believed that the two greatest geniuses of the age could condescend to such a petty warfare as school-boys might have waged upon each other's play-boxes!

Queen Elizabeth Christina, meanwhile, led a life which, from year to year, became more retired and monotonous. During the time that she was still crown Princess, she had received the little estate of Schönhausen as a present. After she became Queen, it was her constant summer residence; she had greatly embellished the gardens and become much attached to the place. She used gladly, therefore, to hail the first sunny April days which might make an excursion thither possible. She was now never invited to join the rest of the family on their visits to the King at Potsdam, or elsewhere. There is extant a nearly continuous series of her letters to her brother Ferdinand, for some years after the peace of Dresden. The sad consciousness of slighted affection, isolation and neglect, runs through them all like a sort of melancholy refrain, as if the writer's thoughts, when allowed to dwell upon herself, had become sorrowfully attuned to that one theme. References, too, are made from time to time in them, to intrigues and "jealousy" on the part of the other members of the royal family, and no doubt there was but too much truth in her suspicions on this head. Frederic himself seems to have been conscious of the ill-feeling with which she was regarded, for in one of his letters to her, dated August 10,

* See Formey's "*Mémoires d'un Citoyen*."

† Ibid.

1739, he says:—"Ne dites point, s'il vous plait, que je vous écris cette fois, parce que n'écris point à la Reine."

The King was very ill in the beginning of the year 1747. The Queen writes to Prince Ferdinand in February—"I can now write, dear brother, with a more tranquil heart than I did by the last post; for, God be praised! our dear King is again better, and out of all danger; he has been very ill, and I have suffered a thousand inquietudes. If I had dared, I should have gone to Potsdam myself, to see him; perhaps he may come on Wednesday. I wish it with all my heart, for it would be the sign of a perfect recovery." In July, the same year, she says delightedly, "I have received a most obliging and gracious letter from the dear Master, apologizing for not alighting here as he passed, and giving me notice that he will come and see me here some day: he has also written to Madame de Camas in the most gracious manner. I keep this secret, so that the family may not hear of it. *Sans quoi elle tâcherait de me jouer de nouveau, tout étant jaloux de la moindre grâce qu'on me témoigne*, but as I know it will give you pleasure, I do not fail to let you know. *Je ne me suis pas sentie de joie* when I received this letter, not having had anything so gracious for a long time."

Another letter of nearly the same period, says, that the Queen Mother being invited to visit the King at Charlottenburg, Elizabeth Christina had requested to be permitted to go likewise. She expresses at the same time the most entire submission to her husband's will, "but," writes she, "it is mortifying to see myself thus always separated from him." This humble request was granted; nevertheless, under the plea that there was not accommodation enough for so many visitors, the reigning Queen was obliged to return every night to Berlin, whilst the Queen Mother and her train were lodged in the palace at Charlottenberg.* July 1748, she speaks of the reported improvements at Potsdam, and of her wish to inspect them. "Yet it is not all

* This was the visit when the fire described by Bielefeld, took place, in 1747.

this magnificence which attracts me, but the dear Master who inhabits the place. Why was it necessary that all should change, and that I should lose all the old kindnesses and favours? I still think with pleasure of the times of Rheinsberg, when I enjoyed perfect contentment, having been kindly received by a master whom I cherish, and for whom I would sacrifice my life. Ah! what regret do I feel now when all is changed!—but my heart will always be the same, and I hope always that all will again be as of old; this sole hope supports me.”—In August, 1749, the Queen Mother and her ladies went to Potsdam, whilst the Queen and her sister, the Princess of Prussia, were left behind.—August 20th, Schönhausen, she writes: “We are all alone here; many of the ladies are gone into the country, and others refuse my invitations. I believe they are afraid to come, lest it should give offence: every one avoids coming; only the good Valori came before leaving for Potsdam: even Madame de Kanneberg could not come to me on Sunday, yet she was the same evening at Monbijou.

“ ‘ Quand la Fortune nous rit
Elle mène à suite une foule d’amis.’

Madame de Kanneburg grieves me, I thought her more constant, and have given her lately real proofs of my friendship; but in this world there is nothing but ingratitude. I hope the dear King is well, and that his fatigues do not injure his health.”

February, 1750. “I wish I could change places with those who are at Potsdam unwillingly, and who do not like to be with the King; as for me, I should hold it one of the greatest blessings which could happen to me; but, in the course of this world, one never has that for which one wishes.”

Again: “I am glad that my sister is of the party, at least it is a pleasure for her, and that is as it should be. I am charmed that it is only I who suffer mortifications, and who am abandoned. The Prince of Prussia offered to leave her, but my greatest happiness is to see her happy; he would have spoken for me, but I replied at once, that though I was very sensible

of the treatment I received, yet it would be an additional mortification to me to see my sister on the same footing as myself. For me there is nothing left to wish for, that can befall me, but to gain the prize in the great lottery at Frankfort to pay my debts with, and then tranquilly await my death, when it shall please God to withdraw me from this world, where there is nothing for me."

Happy indeed was it for her who, despite her high-sounding title, had "nothing in this world," that she had early learned to lay up rich treasures in another, "where neither moth nor rust do corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal."

Yet though Frederic neglected the Queen himself, he would not, wittingly, allow any other person to treat her with the slightest disrespect, as, presuming on the King's supposed total disregard of his consort, ill-informed or upstart strangers were sometimes apt to do. Once, several of the foreign singers, who were performing at Berlin, had the insolence to refuse to perform at a concert given by her. Their conduct brought down a tremendous and well-deserved rebuke from the King, who ordered them, as his "express will," to hold themselves constantly at the command of Her Majesty, lest they should "oblige him to have recourse to more serious measures, to make them repent their extravagant and ridiculous arrogance." The next year he himself arranged the programme for her concert.

Such foreign ambassadors, likewise, as were not wanting in discernment, found that attentions paid to the Queen by their employers, were by no means a bad method of obtaining the favourable attention of the King, as in the case of the Marquis de Valori, who, in his despatches to the French Court, requested that a handsome piece of Vincennes porcelain might be sent to her, because "this present would oblige her, and attentions to her flatter the King of Prussia; for whatever may be his indifference to her, which I believe to be only feigned, it displeases him much to fail in what is due to her."* Occasionally, too, a

* Von Hahnke.

splendid present from Frederic would flatter his gentle wife with delusive hopes of a return of his affection. In 1747 he gave her a splendid phaëton, lined with scarlet velvet and gold, with trappings and housings of the same materials for the eight horses which drew it. In this splendid equipage the Queen appeared, dressed "*à l'amazone*," at a grand review, where the soldiers defiled and saluted before her. The next year she received a similar present ; this time eight milk-white horses, with nodding plumes, bore the Queen to the review, but these presents became rarer, as the necessity of economy impressed itself more and more upon Frederic's mind.

Other sorrows, besides her husband's neglect, disturbed the peace of Elizabeth Christina from time to time ; her long-trying and trusted friend, Madame de Katsch, had been obliged, by ill-health, to cede to Madamede Camas in 1742, her post of Oberhofmeisterin. She sunk gradually afterwards, until it at length became apparent that her existence was drawing to a close ; wishing to spare her beloved mistress pain, she had declined to see her for some time, until the Queen insisted on being allowed to visit her early friend. On seeing Madame de Katsch, she was greatly shocked at the change which had taken place in her appearance, and already lamented the loss which she foresaw awaited her ; Madame de Katsch died in 1748. Another of the sorrows of the Queen of Prussia was, that her brother, Duke Anthony Ulric, had been imprisoned at the time of the revolution, which deposed his infant son Iwan, and placed Elizabeth upon the throne of Russia. Elizabeth Christina had begged her husband to interfere to procure her brother's liberty, and he had pleaded urgent reasons to excuse his not doing so. Duke Anthony therefore remained a prisoner. But a great political crisis was now at hand, which in its own overwhelming interest and excitement swallowed up, in the Queen's mind, all lesser anxieties. A storm, such as had never yet assailed the kingdom of Prussia, had long been gathering, black and terrible, over head. It was now about to burst, and to shake to its very

foundations the throne of Frederic the Great in the course of the Seven Years' War. I need not dwell here upon causes which have been very frequently and fully detailed by so many abler pens ; it is sufficient to say, that Maria Theresa had never forgiven the robbery, as she considered it, which had despoiled her of Silesia, and that her minister Kaunitz was unfriendly to Prussia ; that the petticoat government of France was irritated by the sarcasms of the wicked wit of Sans Souci ; that a similar cause prompted Russian ill-will ; that the omnipotent Brühl, at Dresden, personally disliked Frederic, who had thwarted him in 1742, and again and again since that era. Sweden also was influenced at that moment by France ; besides, a general combination to dismember Prussia, led her once more to cast a longing eye upon Pomerania. Nothing but an alliance was needed to form the most crushing preponderance of power against Prussia. True, Austria and France were hereditary enemies, but now they had a common cause, and Maria Theresa stooped to flatter the Pompadour—that difficulty vanished ; the alliance was formed. No ally but England was left for Prussia. England was already at war with France, both in her American and Asiatic colonies ; an alliance in Europe was desirable ; Russia and Austria had leagued themselves with her enemies ; she turned therefore to Prussia, and these two Powers, hitherto anything but mutually friendly, now united in a league offensive and defensive. With these singularly-altered political relations of the chief Powers of Europe which arrayed “ five Powers, whose united population exceeded ninety millions, against a single kingdom with less than five millions,”* commenced that dreadful struggle, known in history as the Seven Years' War.

Prompt and decided in action, as usual, Frederic did not await the attack of his enemies ; he was well aware of the advantage gained by an unexpected swoop, which like the sudden spring

* See Mahon's England.

of a wild beast, paralyses its victim for a time.* He dined and supped at Monbijou with his mother and wife on the 19th August, 1756. On the 9th of September he was master of Dresden. On the 10th of October the people of Berlin were celebrating the victory of Lowositz;† four days later the Saxon army, intrenched in Pirna, laid down their arms, and the campaign of the autumn of 1756 was at an end. Frederic took up his winter-quarters at Brühl's House, in Dresden.‡

But whilst the "great heart of Her Majesty"§ the Queen of Prussia was pouring out its thankfulness in tears, at the news of the result of the battle of Lowositz, and of the other successes of the Prussian arms, a very different feeling animated the mind of the unhappy Queen of Poland. Left in the capital, and charged with the guardianship of most important papers, by her supine husband and his minister, the discourtesy to which she had been subjected, by Frederic's imperative orders to his officers to secure the papers, added exasperation to the bitterness of spirit with which she beheld the downfall of her country, and joined her to the list of female enemies who had formed so powerful a league against Frederic. Fortune, too, was herself to unite, for a time, with this confederacy, in the ensuing campaign.||

* See Livingstone's Africa, on the effect of the spring and bite of the lion.

† Gained October 1st.

‡ It is said that Frederic indulged his spite against the Saxon minister by shivering one of the magnificent pier-glasses in his luxuriously-furnished house, with his cane. — See Malmesbury's Despatches. Other accounts say that he amused himself by inspecting the toilet appliances of this Saxon exquisite, whose jewels, watches, &c., to an incredible amount, were left behind; but the most curious part of his property was a book, which contained not only an inventory, but also a *portrait* of each of his multitudinous suits of apparel!

§ Sack "expressed in his sermons 'the feeling which inspired the great heart of Her Majesty.'" — See Von Hahnke.

|| See Letter of Frederic to the Lord Marischal, after the battle of Kollin. "Fortune, my dear Lord, has this day turned her back upon me; I ought to have expected it. Fortune is a female, and I am not gallant. Fortune now declares in favour of the ladies, who are making war upon me."

The desperate, but splendid battle of Prague, although it all but destroyed the enemy, maimed Frederic's little army fearfully; and even its dear-bought laurels withered, as he said, when he thought of Marshal Schwerin, as he fell shrouded by the glorious death-sheet of the Prussian banner.*

As yet, nothing but the news of victory after victory had reached the ears which were so anxiously awaiting intelligence in Berlin; but now a terrible disaster in the field, family misfortune and bereavement at home, and calamitous failure on the part of Prussia's only ally, England, combined, nearly at the same moment, to depress the hearts of the royal family, and to paralyse, for the moment, even the energy of Frederic himself.

He had made a flying visit to Berlin in the beginning of January, 1757, and, as usual, spent the last evening of his stay there with his mother, little thinking it was the last time he should ever see her. After that time no marked alteration was visible in her health, until the very day of her death, on the 28th of June, the same year.

The relations of the two Queens had latterly been much more friendly; Elizabeth Christina speaks, in various passages of her letters, of the comfort which the increased kindness of her mother-in-law had proved to her. They appear to have been on terms of even affectionate intimacy for some time before the Queen Mother's death. It was, therefore, with sincere grief upon her own account, as well as upon that of her husband, to whom she well knew the loss would prove a heavy trial, that Elizabeth Christina received the intelligence of the death of her mother-in-law. That of the defeat of Kollin † arrived almost simultaneously. The Queen and the Princess of Prussia passed the evening of that sad day together, in the vain effort to console each other. Fortunately they were not then fully aware of what the probable results of that defeat might be, nor of the domes-

* See Lord Mahon's quotation from Archenholz—"Das panier seines Monarchen deckte ihn, und verhüllte seine Todes-züge."

† The battle of Kollin was fought on the 18th June, 1757.

tic misfortune and premature widowhood which it was to bring upon one of the sisters. But the return of Prince William from the camp,—broken in health, and with that barbed shaft which was to bring him to an untimely grave, already rankling in his heart,—afforded ample occupation both to the Princess and the Queen, in providing, at least, for his bodily comfort, and in striving to assuage the pain of his mental wound.

Frederic's harshness upon this occasion, as before upon the death of her own young brother, seems to have awakened doubts of his justice, even in the mind of his adoring wife. Prince William's character was so amiable and affectionate, and he was so much beloved by all the other members of his family, that the bitter resentment which Frederic testified against him, on account of the disastrous result, (partly caused by his own obstinate disbelief of Prince William's representations,) of the retreat which he had conducted, might well produce doubts as to the nature of his fraternal feelings. Prince William saw his brother but once again, and on that occasion a cutting sarcasm drove him back to Rheinsberg, to mourn over his unjustly-blighted honour, to languish on for a few months, and then to die, in the very prime of his manhood, unreconciled to the brother whose unkindness had broken his heart. And Frederic himself, by no means free from the blame of military tacticians * in the defeat of Kollin, could act thus towards his gentle-hearted brother, whilst the mother that bore them both—and whose death was at that very time causing him the most poignant sorrow—was as yet not laid in her grave. Certainly, the character of this man formed one of the strangest compounds of feeling and the want of it, as well as of grandeur and littleness, which our strange human nature ever presented.

Meanwhile, danger was gathering round Prussia on every side. The very capital fell for a moment into the hands of the enemy. The royal family took hasty refuge at Spandau, and the Austrian general Haddick, levied a contribution of 200,000

* Kugler.

Thalers on Berlin, and procured for his Empress that curious trophy of ladies' kid gloves, which furnished a ludicrous omen of the result of the war, inasmuch as, when unpacked, they were found to be all made to fit the left hand only! * The Convention of Closter Seven, which fettered the hands of his English allies, and left the Hanoverian frontier open to his French enemies, alone seemed wanting to complete the ruin of Frederic; but flinging off the depression caused by defeat and sorrow, he was now once more himself, and once more his enemies retreated, discomfited, before him.

On the eighth of November, her birthday, the Queen celebrated the victory of Rossbach, in Magdeburg,† whither she had received directions from the King to repair, with the Princess Amelia, and the other members of the royal family. And though this battle did but gain King Frederic "leisure to fight another," one month afterwards, the pious Prussian soldiery, who had marched to battle singing that simple prayer of manful hearts—

"Gieb dass ich theu' mit Fleiss was mir zu thun gebühret—"‡

were sending up beneath the star-lit heaven, amidst the dead and wounded, on the bloody field of Leuthen, their solemn hymn of thanksgiving to the God, who had heard and granted

* Kugler.

† Great numbers of the French prisoners taken at Rossbach were sent to Magdeburg; the officers were most kindly treated, rather like visitors of distinction than prisoners. But they seem to have repaid this hospitality by the most disgraceful conduct; when invited to the Queen's assemblies they ransacked the château as if it were the property of a conquered enemy, looking into the buffets, and, it is said, even carrying off the plate; whilst with the grossest disrespect, some of them were seen, lounging and cracking nuts, behind the Queen's chair as she was seated at the card-table.—*Thiebault*. They even ventured to post up scandalous *affiches* respecting some of the court ladies. The Marquis D'Argens wrote to the King to complain of these impertinences, and Frederic gave orders that they should be placed under a somewhat stricter measure of *surveillance*.—*Von Hahnke*.

‡ "Grant that I do with zeal, that which to do behoveth."

As the foremost columns marched forward, singing this hymn, an officer asked Frederic whether he should enjoin silence on the soldiers. He replied "No!" and, turning to the pious Ziethen, remarked—"Do you not think, that with such soldiers, God will certainly give me the victory?"

their prayer. No wonder, as Frederic said, that with "such soldiers God had given him the victory."

These successes having rendered the residence in Berlin once more secure, the Queen and Court prepared to return thither, and great was the rejoicing consequent upon this event, as well as upon the news of the King's victories, for Elizabeth Christina was justly popular in the capital. She was, therefore, received with acclamation when she re-entered its gates on the 5th of January, 1758.

On the Duke of Cumberland resigning the command, after concluding the convention of Closter Seven, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick had been appointed General of the combined English and Hanoverian troops. He set off to assume this charge shortly after the battle of Rossbach. He was the Queen's favourite brother; they were firmly united, not only by the bonds of fraternal affection, but also by the simple, unaffected piety which formed the basis of the characters of both. The intelligence of the glorious distinction which Prince Ferdinand had earned at Crefeld, and of the enthusiastic admiration in which he was held in England, which made such noble English soldiers as Lord Granby and General Conway proud to fight under his command, could not fail to inspire his sister with the liveliest delight. Her husband also once more needed her assistance and mediation with her brother Charles of Brunswick, who had threatened to withdraw his troops; her intervention was successful; the King wrote to thank her from the camp; he mentioned her services also to her brother Ferdinand, speaking of her, in his letter, by that precious, but now seldom-used title of "my wife," and Elizabeth Christina was proud and happy. But many a bitter drop mingled even in that brief draught of pleasure. The death of Prince William, early in June, left her beloved sister crushed and widowed in heart and mind; he had been a tender husband and father, although the natural shyness of his disposition made him ashamed to manifest his feelings openly. He had also been a kind and steady

friend to the Queen herself, and she had too few upon whose friendship she could rely, not to miss him sorely from the circle. She wrote to the King, in her grief and anxiety for her sister; and to her comfort, he promised, in his reply, to be a father to his brother's fatherless children, and the end of his letter was blistered with his tears. He also acceded to her request, that her mother might be allowed to come to visit and comfort the Princess of Prussia; but there is something very painful in the humble request she makes for this little favour, promising that no intrigues shall arise, and that no expense shall be incurred in her mother's reception. Besides these troubles also, the ravages that the Russian army was committing in the northern districts of Prussia, leaving nothing but black and smouldering ruins and houseless, starving wretches, where they had found prosperous villages and a happy peasantry, called for painful sympathy in every feeling heart. Zorndorf, which put a stop to their outrages, though it was a glorious victory, was a day of dreadful battle, where the stern vengeance of the Prussians, which would give or take no quarter, lavishly watered that ghastly field with some of the noblest blood of Prussia, as well as with that of the barbarous foe.

The defence of the Fatherland, too, which had already cost her so dear, was soon to demand another sacrifice from the family of Elizabeth Christina, in the person of her brother, Frederic Franz; thus the defeat of Hochkirch became to her, as but to too many another mourner in the land, a twofold disaster. To add to her own grief also, she shared that of her husband for the death of his favourite sister, the Margravine of Baireuth, which occurred on the 14th of October, the very day of the battle, and which she knew would have a severe effect upon the mind of the King. It was indeed a terrible blow to come upon him, in the midst of the depression caused by the desperate position of his affairs after the defeat, when the salvation of the country itself, depended only upon the exhausted state of the Austrian army, which prevented Daun from imme-

diately taking advantage of his success. That winter, which Frederic passed at Dresden, having resolved not to re-enter his capital, until he could do so with a prospect of peace, was a season of great trial to the Queen. The next year, 1759, in its mingled report of good and evil fortune, furnished tidings of her brother Ferdinand's splendid victory at Minden, but a few posts before the courier of terrible defeat followed at the heels of him, who *was* to have borne triumphant news of victory at Künersdorf. The defeat of Wedell had allowed the junction of Soltikoff and Loudon; Frederic's army was all but destroyed at Künersdorf; the road to Berlin was open to the enemy; and once more the royal family received hasty directions from the King to take shelter at Magdeburg.

As in the cases of Kollin and Hochkirch, the defeat of Künersdorf produced a temporary, but entire prostration in the mind of Frederic. It was in moments such as these that the real weakness of the man, who was without any "sure hope in his God," became apparent. The only idea which possessed attraction for his mind, in his despondency, was the (as he hoped) dreamless sleep of death. He had accustomed himself to the idea of suicide; perhaps, if the truth were known, he rather liked it should be rumoured that he carried a deadly poison constantly about his person; he now, in no doubtful terms, expressed his intention of not surviving disgrace. Truly it was not astonishing that the mind of a man, who had been constantly, for the last four years, straining every nerve to meet, with his little army, the overwhelming numbers of the foes which beset him on every side, should sometimes be unstrung. He had written to D'Argens in the beginning of the year that there was no longer a "Sans Souci" in the world for him; that his friend would not recognise him, in the old, gray, worn-out man he had become. He complained to Algarotti of the fate that rendered him "homeless, like the wandering Jew." His health was not equal to the dreadful fatigues of body and mind which he was called upon to encounter. Nevertheless, even at a mo-

ment when he seemed on the very brink of despair and self-destruction—an oversight of the enemy, an instant's hesitation in taking advantage of a victory—afforded stimulus enough to set Frederic's boundless energy once more in full play, and some masterly and lightning-like movement forestalled his adversary's march, or defeated his best-laid plans. So it was in the present instance; Soltikoff had suffered much from the battle; another such victory, said he, and he must carry his staff to his imperial mistress, as all that remained of his command. He and Loudon allowed a difference of opinion to divide the unity of their operations; neither of them would march on to Berlin at once. Frederic took advantage of their delay to repair his numerical losses. In an incredibly short time he was again ready for the contest, but his adversaries separated and withdrew, leaving him free to hasten into Saxony, where he had experienced several misfortunes.

The winter season of rest gave him time to provide for the emergencies of the next campaign. True the treasuries had long been exhausted, the coinage was debased to the lowest degree, and the English subsidies eked out with alloy;* whilst recruits were levied, seduced, or stolen, no one knew whence;† still the next year found the King of Prussia making head, as vigorously as ever, against the Austrian and Russian generals. The victory of Liegnitz, in the autumn of 1760,

* Thiébault says that the four millions furnished by England, became ten in the hands of Ephraim the Jew (who was employed by Frederic to extend his finances in various ways).—See the “*Souvenirs de Vingt Ans.*”

† The French frontiers furnished many of these recruits, who were either dazzled by the hope of speedy promotion in Frederic's army, or forcibly carried off by the Prussian emissaries. Few of these young men could speak German, they were therefore, before the King saw them, generally taught to pronounce the regular answers to the three questions which he always asked them in German on these occasions—“How old are you?” “How long have you served?” “Are you well fed and treated?” Frederic one day accidentally transposed these questions, so that the dialogue then took place in the following order:—“How long have you served?”—“Twenty-one years.” “How old are you?”—“One year, Sire!” “Are you mad or am I?”—“Both, Sire.” For this anecdote see Thiébault's “*Souvenirs*,” and the “*Karakterzüge F.W.I.*”

secured him Silesia, but Berlin fell into the enemy's hands, despite the gallant defence of the wounded hero of Rossbach and Zorndorf, Seydlitz. The news of the King's approach, however, sufficed to free the capital from the presence of the invaders ; and Frederic was back in Saxony, driving Daun from his intrenchments, and forcing him to give battle at Torgau, by the 3rd of November.

The campaign of the next year was one of extreme difficulty, and though no absolute defeat crippled the forces of Frederic, still he was hemmed in by enemies on every side. The ministry of Lord Bute deprived him of the regular supplies he had hitherto relied upon from England : Choiseul's attempts at a pacification were unsuccessful. Prussia seemed once more on the brink of destruction, when the death of the Empress Elizabeth, placed Frederic's ardent admirer, Peter the Third, on the throne, and thus by bringing about a peace with Russia, procured him a moment's breathing time and a nearer approach to an equality of forces ; and though upon the deposition and murder of Peter the Third, the Empress Catherine recalled her troops (for she was by no means so warm an ally of Frederic's as her husband had been, although, as Princess of Anhalt Zerbst, she had lived in his dominions, been received by his Queen, and even owed to him her elevation to the imperial crown),* yet Frederic succeeded in inducing Czernitzcheff to delay his march, until he had time once more to give battle to Daun, whom he completely defeated at Burkersdorf. Sweden, long since weary of the war, had found it imperatively necessary, when Russia joined Frederic, herself to make peace with Prussia. The peace of Paris, in November, 1762, which withdrew England and France from the war, left Frederic more than a match for Maria Theresa ; she had therefore now no choice but to submit to a peace, which left Silesia, the primary cause of contention, still in the hands of her detested antagonist

* He had procured her selection as consort of Peter III., in order to strengthen his interests in Russia.

Frederic, Austria as well as Prussia terribly impoverished in men and money.

Thus was dissipated "what Chatham termed, with some exaggeration, the most malignant confederacy that ever yet has threatened the independence of mankind,"* and thus terminated the most extraordinary struggle ever, perhaps, chronicled in history, in which the genius of one man supplied to Prussia the place of troops, resources and allies; and in which, also, though constantly contending with a heavy numerical superiority, in twelve pitched battles Frederic was only three times completely defeated.†

One great secret of his success, no doubt, was the kindly familiarity with which his troops regarded him. There is something very pleasant in the friendly relation which existed between Frederic and his men all through the long campaigns of this war. He commonly addressed them as his "children," and in reply they termed him "Fritz," or "alter Fritz." When on a weary march the soldiers fell out of rank, the King's "Gerade, Kinder, Gerade!" would not unfrequently be replied to, by "Auch Fritz gerade, und die Stiefel in die Höhe!"‡ The womanly kindness which many a wounded soldier received at his hands, had greatly endeared him to these rough children of his. His affectionate attention and respect for the venerable

* See Lord Mahon's "History of England, from 1713 to 1789."

† It is remarkable that in each of these defeats Frederic carried out an error of judgment with a persistence which looks like infatuation. At the battle of Kollin he suddenly changed a plan which was leading him to victory, and forced Prince Moritz of Dessau, at the sword's-point, to carry out the new dispositions, despite his urgent remonstrances. At Hochkirch, Keith (a Scotchman, brother of the Lord Marischal), said that if the Austrians did not attack, they "deserved to be hanged." Yet Frederic suffered them to surprise his troops in their sleep. At Künersdorf the Russians were already defeated, when, notwithstanding the exhaustion of his soldiers, from the violent heat as well as the foregoing conflict, he forgot to make a golden bridge before a flying foe, and, despite the remonstrances of the gallant Seydlitz, led them on to renew the engagement, was met by a fresh body of troops, and entirely defeated.

‡ "Straight, children, straight!" "Fritz straight, too, and pull your boots up!"

Ziethen, his "old father," as he called him, is likewise a truly pleasant feature in Frederic's character, amidst these stern scenes of blood and war.*

Whilst these events were passing in the field, it may be imagined what anxiety prevailed in the minds of the royal family of Prussia at home. The enemy did not march upon Berlin immediately after the battle of Künersdorf, as had been expected, nor was it until October, 1760, that Tottleben and Lacy approached the capital. Elizabeth Christina heard with regret, from her retreat at Magdeburg, of the havoc which their barbarous troops had committed at Charlottenburg, and of the desecration of those quiet shades at Schönhausen, where, having dismissed her train, she used to find the company of a book and the music of the nightingales, such a pleasant exchange for the society of the Court.† Still this was but a trifling grievance, compared with the other terrible evils of war. Nor could the jocund news of triumph after triumph, which made the hearts of the Magdeburgers to "bound" when they "heard couriers arriving in constant succession, each bringing the news of some fortress taken, some victory won," ‡ silence the voice of distress amongst the people, and of grief amongst the bereaved. The population of Berlin itself had been reduced

* One night after a battle the old man fell asleep beside a camp fire ; the King watched his slumbers well pleased, and said to the officer who brought him a message, "Hush! don't wake Ziethen, he is tired," whilst he smiled his approbation of the trooper who gently placed a log under the slumbering veteran's head. One day, long after peace was restored, Ziethen, then a very old man, came into the audience chamber ; as soon as the King saw him he went to him, saying, "I am sorry you have come up all these steps, I would rather have come to you." He then ordered a chair to be brought for his old friend, and, on Ziethen declining to sit in his presence, he said, "Sit down, old father, sit down, or I shall leave the room sooner than inconvenience you."

† Letter from Elizabeth Christina to her brother, 1756. "I live very tranquilly here ; if it is too hot, I take a book and go into the little wood ; the company of books is better than that of my train, who have only to do what they please and not trouble themselves about me." "We occasionally breakfast in one of the new summer-houses, where nothing is to be heard but the nightingales and the murmur of the water."

‡ Rötger. See Preuss, "Lebens Geschichte."

by nearly one-tenth in the course of the war, and a very large proportion of those who remained were in a state of beggary. Elizabeth Christina found but too heavy a call upon the munificence of her ever ready hand, both here and at Magdeburg, and at both places she was looked up to with a species of loving veneration. When permission came from the King for the Queen and royal family to return to the no longer insecure capital, the people of Magdeburg, though they shared their benefactress's joy that she was about to return to her home, assembled to witness her departure with regret; but a proportionate degree of rejoicing prevailed at Berlin. The preacher Küster bears witness to the noble example set by the Queen's conduct during those times of trial. "Never," said he, "shall I forget those stormy Magdeburg hours, in which Her Majesty, during the war, set an example of the highest piety and most heroic confidence in God. When the prudent and the cowardly trembled, she alone was unshaken in her glad hope for the future." "God preserve the mother of this land, who prayed for us in time of need!" said the sermon on the restoration of peace; and who can tell how much the prayers of that gentle and righteous woman availed in her husband's cause?

Great, indeed, was her thankful delight, when her prayers were answered, and her unshaken faith rewarded by the restoration of peace, which was announced to her by a letter from her husband, dated March 3, 1763, saying that he hoped to sup with her in Berlin, before the end of the month.

The peace of Hübertsburg was concluded on the 15th of February, 1763. On the 30th of March following, Frederic the Great once more re-entered his capital; and, to add to the heartfelt delight of the Queen, the same carriage which brought the man who was dearer to her than the whole world besides, contained also him who held the next place in her heart—her noble brother Ferdinand, seated in the place of honour beside the King whom he had so gloriously served.

The people crowded the roads, and waited at the gates from early morning until night, when Frederic at last arrived; but

the enthusiastic shouts that greeted his appearance seemed to wake an echo of past suffering in every heart. It was six years since the King had last set foot in his capital ; he had visited Künersdorf by the way, and his heart was thronged by painful remembrances. He had written to his old friend D'Argens, shortly before, " I, a poor old man, return to a town, of which I know nothing save the walls, where I meet none of my acquaintances, where innumerable labours await me, and where, in a short time, I must lay my old bones in a resting-place which neither war, sorrow, nor wickedness can disquiet." It was with feelings of a very mingled nature, therefore, that he returned the greetings of his subjects. Shortly after his return he ordered Graun's *Te Deum* to be performed in the chapel at Charlottenburg. It was supposed that the whole Court would be present, but, contrary to all expectation, Frederic entered the chapel alone, sat down and covered his face with his hands, and thus remained during the whole of the performance.

The years which followed were indeed a period of blissful quiet, after the storms which had convulsed not only the bounded horizon of Prussia, but that of both the eastern and western hemispheres besides. I have little of interest to relate with regard to the uneventful life of Elizabeth Christina after this time. The two journeys to Magdeburg were the only occasions on which she left the walls of the capital to travel a greater distance than to Schönhausen during the whole period of her married life. She had entertained a great desire to go to Brunswick to see her sister Juliana, whom she had not seen since she was a child, before her Danish marriage in 1759, but she would not ask the King, for fear of annoying him : she never saw that sister again. She lost her mother in the spring of the year 1762, and although she had been long parted from her, it caused her bitter grief : still her sister, the Princess of Prussia, remained to her, and on her and her children she delighted in bestowing marks of her affection.

The marriage of her nephew, Frederic William, the crown Prince of Prussia, son of Prince William and Louisa Amalie, to

his cousin, who was also the Queen's niece, Elizabeth Christina Ulrica, the daughter of Charles, (now reigning Duke of Brunswick,) and Frederic's sister Charlotte, took place in 1765. This union, which seemed at first to promise such happy results, was in the end fraught with the most disastrous consequences to the unfortunate Princess Elizabeth. She was handsome in person, engaging and graceful in manner, lively, high-spirited and impetuous in disposition. There were materials of the fairest promise in such a character as this, but unfortunately the very qualities which might have brought happiness to herself and others were, in her, perverted by the most cruel of causes. Nature had bestowed upon the crown Prince a far greater preponderance of matter than of mind, says the author of the "*Vertraute Briefe*." Frederic William was now twenty-one years of age; his disposition was good, but his capacity was slender; he resembled the Brunswicks in person,* being six feet two in height, and proportionally stout. But he was unfortunately addicted to the grossest sensuality, and his time, when not occupied by his military duties, was spent with vile women and other loose companions. His young wife resented this conduct in the highest degree; wounded alike in her wifehood and her womanhood, she not only separated herself from the crown Prince, and haughtily refused him admission to her presence, but, alas! she sacrificed even virtue to revenge.† The crown Prince was informed of certain of her secrets, by a mask, at a ball given by Prince Henry on the 24th of January, to celebrate the King's birthday. Being himself so immaculate an example of conjugal fidelity, he was violently enraged at the discovery, and impatiently demanded a divorce. The crown Princess, on account of her sprightly manner, intelligence, and amiable disposition, was a great favourite with the King, her uncle. He had but little respect for the virtue of the female sex, and none for the character of his sensual nephew; he would fain, on all accounts, have accommodated matters, but Frederic William was urgent in his demand for a divorce, and, in the year 1769, a

* Thiébauld.

† Ibid.

divorce was accordingly pronounced. The crown Princess laid aside the title of *Royal* for that of *Serene Highness*, and was placed under confinement at Küstrin ; she passed the remainder of her life here, and at Stettin. One of the Brunswick family was the governor of Küstrin, and his kindness much relieved the dulness of her imprisonment. Still it was a solitary life for a warm-hearted person like this unhappy lady. She had always been very fond of dancing, in which her graceful figure caused her to excel ; it is said that to wear out the tedious hours of her solitude, she used sometimes to place all the chairs in a long row in her apartments, and dance "*Anglaises*" between them ; this, however, was but a sorry refuge from *ennui*. Thiébauld, from whose "*Souvenirs*" I have drawn most of these particulars, says, that she once attempted to make her escape, with the purpose of going to Venice, but the officer who was to have been her guide, suddenly disappeared, and she remained in imprisonment. It was reported at the time that she received a visit from her husband after his accession ; the strictness of her imprisonment was much relaxed after this epoch, and she received permission to entertain visitors, and to walk, and ride on horseback in the environs of the town. Mirabeau says that her liberty was offered her, but that she declined it, preferring to remain at Stettin. She died at this place, aged 94, in 1840. Her high spirit seems never to have failed her, for the "*Souvenirs*" relate that, her mother having sent her a piece of brocade for a dress, as a New Year's gift, the officer appointed to collect the customs wished to open the packet, but she refused to allow him to do so, and on his persisting somewhat insolently in his demand, she gave him a hearty box on the ear, which indignity so enraged him that he appealed to the King for redress ; but he received for answer, "that no man could ever be insulted by a blow from the hand of so fair a lady," and had to digest the affront as best he might. Unfortunately, the ruin of this unhappy Princess drew down misfortune and disgrace upon one from whom she would have given worlds to avert it ; this was her brother, Prince William of Brunswick. He was a

young man of the most promising disposition and talents ; he had been aware of his sister's indiscretions, and in his endeavours to screen her faults and defend her honour, he had himself become involved in the accusations brought against her ; he was therefore ordered not to leave his regiment. This injustice weighed upon his mind ; he asked to be allowed to resign his commission, but was not permitted to do so ; he then endeavoured to occupy himself with the composition of a French poem which he had begun, upon the conquest of Mexico ; but the brand of dishonour was burning into his brain and heart ; he now demanded permission to enter the service of the Empress Catherine in the war against the Turks, and his request was granted. Here in two battles he fought bravely, despairingly, like a man who vainly seeks, amidst the shower of bullets, one merciful messenger of death to still his pain. Covered with glory, but broken-hearted, he found the death he had vainly sought in the battle-field, from a fever, mainly caused by the depression of his mind. Another of the Princess Elizabeth's brothers, Frederic, is spoken of by Mirabeau as being much given to intrigue, and as having vilely aided to publish the dishonour of his sister. Her eldest brother was that Ferdinand, Duke of Brunswick, who, as hereditary prince, so much distinguished himself under the command of his uncle Prince Ferdinand, at Minden, and throughout the Westphalian campaign ; who afterwards conducted with doubtful skill and more than doubtful fidelity the French campaign of 1792 ; and who, made commander-in-chief by Frederic William III., upon the strength, or rather weakness of a fallacious glitter of reputation, ruined the cause of Prussia in 1806, offering up his sight and his worn-out life, a sacrifice to the genius of his offended country, at Auerstadt.

This has been a long but a necessary digression from the quiet and even tenor of the life of the gentle and virtuous Queen of Prussia. To return to that theme, therefore. The King was deeply affected by the fate of his niece ; with a degree of feeling that did him credit, he wrote to his Queen to

take her infant daughter under her own charge, after the divorce. "There is," said he, "only this poor child remaining to her, and she can find no asylum save with you; let the little one have the apartments lately occupied by my niece of Holland." Had Elizabeth Christina needed any impulse, save that of her own kind heart, willingly to undertake this responsibility, her husband's slightest wish would have been a law to her; she therefore took the child to her heart, feeling that though God had denied her the blessing of children of her own, yet that He had now in an especial manner made up to her for the privation, by placing under her maternal care this doubly-orphaned child; and, while she sorrowed over the faults and misfortunes of the mother, she strove diligently to supply her place to the child, and well and wisely did she fulfil the duties which Providence had thus manifestly delegated to her. The child, as it grew up, repaid her cares by a truly filial affection, and, in the course of time, when the Princess Frederica of Prussia was married to the Duke of York, her letters from England afforded one of Elizabeth Christina's greatest pleasures. Queen Charlotte, of England, who owed her selection as the Queen of George the Third, to Frederic the Great,* and who, at the time of her own marriage, had already had some kindly intercourse of letters with the Queen of Prussia, whom she much esteemed, wrote to Elizabeth Christina upon the occasion of her son's union with the Princess Frederica. "If anything could add to my satisfaction at the choice of my son, it would be the lively interest which your Majesty takes in the fate of this Princess, your pupil, and I assure you that a Princess brought up under your eye, and to whom you render

* When the Prussian troops overran the Principality of Mecklenburg Strelitz during the Seven Years' War, the Princess Sophia Charlotte, then a young girl, was so distressed by the sufferings of her people, that she wrote to Frederic the Great in a manner which caused him to conceive a great respect for her mind and heart. With his usual politic view of marrying German princesses to the rulers of foreign countries, and thus introducing the claims of family connection, always strong amongst those of German blood, he sent a copy of this letter to the young King of England, George III., who had just ascended the throne, and who was

so high a testimony, shall find in me not only a mother but a friend ; and I hope that in gaining the Princess's friendship, I shall also gain a part in yours, which would be of great value to me." The young Duchess of York, in her first letters from England, tells her great aunt how well Queen Charlotte had kept this promise, in the motherly reception which she gave her, how she had appeared touched at the Queen of Prussia's letter, and with what delicate kindness a portrait of her more than

recommended to select a consort. George III. was struck, as Frederic, knowing his character, imagined he would be, by the tone of feeling and good sense displayed by the letter, and he caused proposals to be made for the hand of the Princess who had written it.

A copy of the important epistle which brought "good Queen Charlotte" to England, is subjoined :—

"May it please your Majesty,—

"I am at a loss whether I should congratulate or condole with you on your late victory, since the same success which has covered you with laurels has overspread the country of Mecklenburg with desolation. I know, Sire, that it seems unbecoming in my sex, in this age of vicious refinement, to feel for one's country, to lament the horrors of war, or to wish for the return of peace. I know you may think it more properly my province to study the arts of pleasing, or to inspect subjects of a more domestic nature, but, however unbecoming it may be in me, I cannot resist the desire of interceding for this unhappy people.

It was but a very few years ago that this territory wore the most pleasing appearance. The country was cultivated, the peasant looked cheerful, and the towns abounded with riches and festivity. What an alteration, at present, from such a charming scene ! I am not expert at describing, nor can my fancy add any horrors to the picture ; but surely even conquerors themselves would weep at the prospect now before me. The whole country, my dear country, lies before me one frightful waste, presenting objects to excite terror, pity, and despair. The business of the husbandman and the shepherd are quite discontinued ; the husbandman and the shepherd are become soldiers themselves, and assist to ravage the soil they formerly cultivated. The towns are inhabited only by old men, women, and children, with perhaps here and there a wounded and crippled warrior, left as useless at his own door. See how his little children come round him, ask the history of every wound, and grow almost soldiers themselves before they have judgment to calculate the distress that war brings upon mankind. But all this might be borne, did we not suffer from the alternate insolence of either army, as it happens to advance or retreat, in pursuing the objects of the campaign ; it is impossible to express the confusion which those who even call themselves our friends create, and those from whom we might expect redress oppress us with new calamities. From your justice, Sire, it is, therefore, that we hope for relief ; even women and children may complain to you, whose humanity stoops to the meanest petition, and whose power is capable of redressing the greatest injustice.

"I am, Sire, &c."

—See Andrews's Life of George III.

mother, Elizabeth Christina, had been placed in her room, to greet her with the well-known smile on her arrival, and that the sight of that dear face had moved her to tears, even in the midst of her bridal happiness, as the thought of the happy days she had spent under her aunt's care came over her mind. Again came from Oaklands one telling how the Duchess had "spent yesterday, Jan. 6, 1793, from 4 P.M. till 3 A.M., in the House of Commons," and that the eleven hours thus spent had seemed to her like a few minutes, so absorbed had she been in the interest of the all-exciting topic then undergoing discussion, &c.

A very sincere attachment also subsisted between the Princess Wilhelmina of Prussia and her aunt the Queen, and after the former's marriage with the hereditary Prince of Orange took her to Holland, her frequent and affectionate letters proved with what interest the health and well-being of this friend of her youth still inspired her.

In the year 1766 Elizabeth Christina lost her friend Madame de Camas. This lady was also much valued by the King; he used often either to write to her, or to inquire after her health by the name of "*la petite maman*" in his letters to the Queen; but her loss was principally felt by the latter, for they had had a common feeling on the most vital of all points—the subject of religion. The Queen afterwards spent much time in the study of a book which had afforded consolation to the last hours of Madame de Camas; in order to impress it more deeply upon her mind, she began the work of translating it into French; when finished she had it printed, under the title of "*Le Chrétien dans la Solitude*," and dedicated it to her brother. This was the first of the series of publications which emanated from the pen of the Queen of Prussia, but she afterwards frequently employed her leisure in writing; chiefly, her works were translations of her favourite authors. In 1778, at the commencement of the war of the Bavarian succession, she published a pamphlet entitled "*Réflexions sur l'Etat des Affaires publiques en 1778, adressées aux Personnes craintives*." This little work

was intended as a call to rouse the patriotism of the people, and stimulate their attachment towards the King.* Her writings were generally signed "Constance," in allusion to the name of "Constant" borne by Frederic in his "Bayard's Order" at Rheinsberg. A copy of each of her works was handsomely bound and sent to the King, who allotted them a conspicuous place in his library, and who in return always presented her with a copy of each of his own writings as they issued from the press.

Frederic never visited the Queen during the latter period of his life, except once a year upon her birthday, when he always dined at her house, and for that one day in the year left off his boots, appearing in black silk stockings, which, being ungartered, hung in folds about his legs.† What a contrast was presented by the slovenly, snuff-besmeared,‡ stooping figure of Frederic in his old age, to the gay young cavalier, so fastidious in his attire, whom her fancy delighted to recall in the halcyon days of Rheinsberg!

But although he visited her thus seldom, it was observed that her happiness and welfare were an object of solicitude to him; and that he was always anxious and uneasy if she was reported to be indisposed. This was the case at the time of the visit of the Archduke Paul of Russia, on his marriage to the Princess of Mecklenburg, when the Queen was ill and unable to receive them: on another occasion when he heard that she was seriously unwell, he wrote instructions to his own medical man to go to

* She translated also the "Odes," and some other poems of Gellert, and several other works.

† Thiébauld.

‡ Frederic took snuff in immense quantities in his old age; his valets-de-chambre were said to gain a considerable perquisite by shaking it from his handkerchiefs and clothes.—*Malmesbury's Despatches*. When Dr. Moore visited Berlin in 1779, he went to see Sans Souci; he was asked if he would also wish to see the King's wardrobe. On the display of "two blue coats faced with red, the lining of one a little torn, two yellow waistcoats a good deal soiled with Spanish snuff, three pair of yellow breeches, and a suit of blue velvet" for State occasions, of remote fashion, but "still preserving all the vigour of youth," he imagined that these "old rags" were considered interesting as relics of Frederic's campaigns; great, therefore, was his astonishment when told that, with the exception of a suit or two at Potsdam, this was the whole extent of the King's wearing apparel.

her immediately, and to take the opinions of two other physicians, in whom he had most confidence, on her case, and also to remember “qu’il s’agit de la personne la plus chère et la plus nécessaire à l’état, aux pauvres et à moi.”

Amongst the travellers who visited Berlin during the latter part of the reign of Frederic the Great was Dr. Moore, the English tourist. He thus describes a reception of the Queen at Schönhausen, at which he was present (in 1779):—“The Queen has one Court-day in the week, when the Princes, nobility, and foreign ambassadors wait upon her, at five o’clock. After she has made the tour of the circle, and said a few words to each, she seats herself at the card-table. The Queen has her own table, and each of the Princesses has one. The rest of the company shows itself a moment at each of these card-tables, and then the attendance for the day is over, and they walk in the garden, or form other card-tables in the other rooms, as it pleases them, and return to Berlin at dusk. Sometimes the Queen invites a good many of them to supper, and then they remain till midnight. These are the only assemblies where one meets the Berlin ladies in summer.” He also remarks, that the ladies of Berlin very much resemble Frenchwomen in the ease and grace of their manners.

From the allusions to her debts in some of Elizabeth Christina’s letters, it may have been gathered that her income was not a very liberal one. Hence we find frequent allusions to the sparing nature of these supper entertainments at Schönhausen, where the tables were so much more profusely supplied with plate than with eatables, that people were obliged to sup again on their return home. Thiébauld says, that upon one occasion the Maréchale von Schmettau, who, as an invalid, had been particularly recommended by the Queen to the care of her attendants, only succeeded in obtaining one preserved cherry for her supper! Amongst strangers especially, it of course, excited great surprise, that, these being the only Court assemblies in Berlin, the Queen should not be enabled to hold them in a more splendid manner, and many were the jokes which arose

in consequence. "The Queen must have a grand gala to-night," said Charpentier; "I saw an old lamp lighted on the staircase as I passed!"

During the latter years of Frederic II.'s life the economy which he had found it necessary to practise during the stress of war, had not only settled into a habit, but had degenerated into absolute parsimony. He carried his saving propensities to almost as great an extent of eccentricity as his father had done; upon state entertainments, says Malmesbury, he not only prescribed the number and quality of the dishes, but even gave directions for the number and size of the wax-candles to be employed, "so great was his Prussian Majesty both in small and great affairs." Malmesbury himself (then Mr. Harris,) saw the King, at an entertainment given on occasion of the Prince of Dessau's marriage, engaged "in directing the servants in lighting up the ball-room, and telling them where and how to place the candles, whilst during the performance of this operation the Queen and the royal family were waiting, literally in the dark, as His Majesty did not begin this ceremony until supper was finished, and no one presumed to give orders that it should be done;" "all the other apartments, except those immediately dedicated to supper or cards, were lighted by one single candle, whilst the supper itself was badly served, and without dessert, the wines bad, and the quantity of them stinted; I asked, after dancing, for some wine and water, and was answered, "The wine is all gone, but you can have some tea." And these petty savings were not carried on only in the private circle of the royal family, or in "public entertainments where such restrictions might be allowable, but in those at which foreign ministers and strangers were received."

The same author states that the King's economy very much restricted his hospitality, even to his own family; thus, when the Queen Dowager of Sweden—once "*les beaux yeux*"* of

* "*Les beaux yeux*" was now an old woman, and, according to Thiébault, though an amiable, not an inviting person; but she was accompanied by a very

Seckendorf's journal, the fair Princess Ulrica, whom we saw weeping so bitterly on leaving her home for her distant Swedish bridegroom and Court,—paid a visit to Berlin during Harris's sojourn there, the King, at the expiration of the time he had allotted for the duration of her stay, told her how grieved he was to bid her farewell, and—discharged her temporary *maître de cuisine* !

But “great” as his Prussian Majesty “was in little things,” we can carry no further, with regard to him, the quotation of his remark upon his grandfather, for he was never “little in great ones.” He had returned to Berlin, after the close of the Seven Years' War, in many respects an altered man. Privation and hardship seem, from his youth up, to have had a peculiarly hardening and narrowing effect upon his disposition. We find him in his old age confirmed in his selfishness ; suspicious even of the intimate associates and, so called, friends of years ; capricious, irritable, sarcastic and heartless in his intercourse with them ; artfully drawing them into some injudicious expression of opinion, some too gross flattery, in order to turn it against them, and insult them vilely, whilst they dared make no reply. Even D'Argens, the tried friend of thirty years, met with the most biting sarcasms, the cruellest slights, from him.

charming and beautiful young princess, her daughter, who was said strikingly to resemble the portraits of the beautiful Queen Sophia Charlotte. During their visit, Formay, the author of “*Mém. d'un Citoyen*,” one of the pastors of the French colony, a “licensed chatterbox,” but most terribly indiscreet and devoid of tact in his chatterings, on the Queen of Sweden asking him whether he was going to the play, replied that he had no ticket. She soon after sent him one by the hands of her fair young daughter, and Formay, to the great amusement of all present, exclaimed with *empressement*, “*Que le bon Dieu vous le rende dans son saint paradis !*” Thiébauld relates, that the Queen of Sweden having a desire to put the astonishing powers of the visionary Swedenborg (then *Conseiller des mines* in Sweden), to the test, asked him to repeat to her the words which had passed between her and her brother, Prince William at their last interview, and which were known to no other living person. After a short interval he repeated to her the very words which her brother had said to her, together with the exact circumstances, place and time of the interview. — *Souvenirs de Vingt Ans.*

The only person who seems to have received constant and unvarying kindness at his hands was his sister Amelia ; whether this might have been, as Thiébault suggests, from a tender desire to make up to her the long years of trial and sorrow she had endured on account of her unfortunate attachment to Baron Trenck, it is difficult to say. The above-mentioned author gives a somewhat detailed account of this mysterious affair ; but a brief summary is all that my space admits of here, and I must add that Thiébault cannot always be relied upon for perfect accuracy. He says that the Swedish proposals of marriage were at first intended for the Princess Amelia, but that she having conscientious scruples, on the score of the necessary change of religion, acquainted her sister Ulrica with her repugnance to the proposed union. The Princess Ulrica advised her to assume the appearance of caprice and *hauteur*, which advice she followed, and it having been part of the Swedish ambassador's instructions to observe both the Princesses, especially with regard to manner and temper, he transferred the suit to Ulrica, and she, having no religious scruples, accepted willingly. Her sister Amelia, notwithstanding her own professed dislike to the match, was greatly incensed at this transfer, and out of pique, on the occasion of her sister's marriage, bestowed a scarf on the handsome young Trenck, who had had the gold fringe stolen from his, in the crowd. Trenck reciprocated the inclination manifested for him by the Princess ; their interviews were carried on clandestinely, but rumours of what was going on reached the King's ears. Trenck was put under military arrest time after time, as a quiet means of marking the King's displeasure. But the lovers were too blinded by passion to take the intended hint. The King then sent Trenck on a mission to Vienna, in order to remove him from the vicinity of the Princess ; but on his return, his visits to her were resumed. The King's anger was roused at this persistence in folly. He said to Trenck, when he presented himself on his return, " Where were you before you started ? " " Under

arrest, your Majesty.” “Indeed ! then return to arrest.” At length Trenck was imprisoned on a charge of having betrayed the plans of Prussian fortresses to Austria. On this, his mother applied to Frederic, who told her that if the young man would return to his proper duties, his case was not desperate. But Trenck, meanwhile, had made his escape from confinement, by leaping from the prison walls, and then carrying the companion of his flight, (who had his leg broken in the fall,) upon his back, past the Prussian frontiers. He was incautious in speech and behaviour after his escape ; suffered himself to be seized upon Prussian ground, and was again and more strictly imprisoned. He was afterwards set at liberty, by the intercession of the Empress Maria Theresa.*

Grief and disappointment at the unhappy results of her ill-omened passion seem to have partially disordered the mind of the Princess Amelia. She fell ill, and is said wilfully to have misapplied the remedies prescribed by her medical attendants, so that she nearly lost her sight in consequence. Thiébauld and Wraxhall describe her appearance as something frightful ; her eyes were nearly “starting from her head ;” her palsied limbs appeared as if they could scarcely support her attenuated body, her voice was hollow and sepulchral. Her disposition also seems to have been completely altered. She had not a good word to say of any one. Prince Henry used to call her “*la fée malfaisante*.” We are led to conclude that her mind must have been shaken, from various circumstances. At the time that the royal family were necessitated to escape to Magdeburg in such haste that the court-yard was strewn with all sorts of precious articles, hurriedly flung from the windows, because there was no time to remove them in any other way, the Princess

* Trenck afterwards married ; he is said to have forced his bride, on the night of the wedding, to confess some indiscretion of which he had heard she had been guilty, by threatening to shoot her on the spot if she did not ; but he proved a very affectionate husband afterwards. He and the Princess Amelia met but once after his liberation, in the old age of both. Trenck was guillotined during the revolution in France.

Amelia appeared "glittering with diamonds and radiant with joy." Her most intimate friend, Madame de Kleist, was obliged to remain at Berlin with her sick mother. "What," said the Princess, "are you not going with us?" "My mother is ill, and I cannot leave her," said her friend. "But, my dear, these Russians are savages, they will pillage and burn everything; they will certainly kill you, and your death will not save your mother." Madame de Kleist still replied, that, do what they would, she could not leave her mother. "If it be so," said the Princess, "I shall see you no more, so adieu, my dear friend!" *

It is said that during the Seven Years' War, she used to pass day after day in having the fortune of the cards † consulted for her brother, who, though he was by far too rational and philosophical to believe in a revealed religion, appears to have been not altogether superior to the influence of superstition. The Princess was much disliked at Berlin, and was looked upon as the King's spy. Her brother, however, constantly showed her the kindest consideration in all imaginable ways during the whole of his reign. She died in 1787, aged sixty-four. After the peace of Hubertsburg, although Frederic kept a vigilant eye upon the proceedings of the foreign Powers, he had no call to divert his attention from the internal administration of his kingdom, until the Russian designs upon Poland roused him to put in his claim for a share of the spoil. There could be no question as to the admirable policy, nor as to the abominable morality of this step,—but that was nothing to Frederic the Great. Austria was obliged to consent; and Poland, unhappy, rent by divisions, ready for any one to pick up who would take the trouble to stoop for it, ‡ like a wounded fawn, fell a victim to those fierce birds of prey, the double-headed eagles of Russia and Austria, and the black eagle of Prussia.

* See Thiébault.

† Ibid.

‡ The Empress Catherine said of Poland, "Il n'y a qu'à se baisser et en prendre."

This was, or rather should have been, the Augustan age of literature and science at Berlin. With a King who wrote and a Queen who wrote, what could the subjects do but write? Nevertheless, the literature of Berlin was a foreign, not a German literature. French was the language of the Court, of the nobility, of the tradespeople; only the very vulgar people, the *canaille*, spoke German, it was vulgar almost to understand it: what did it matter that foreign French is always barbarous, and that German French is particularly so? Frederic William tried hard, like a plain, honest man as he was, to make his people speak their own language; certainly the half French, half Platt-Deutsch jargon he made use of himself was not particularly elegant—still it was better than a wholly foreign tongue, crippled and halting with bad accent and insufficient freedom, into the bargain, and his attempt does him honour. Frederic II. spoke French and wrote French; nearly all his literati were French; he allowed, indeed, that it was a pity German was not more cultivated, but he did not cultivate it himself; and therefore, as yet, the most enlightened Court in Germany had no literature of its own. Nevertheless, though thus neglected by royalty, the German language was about to assert itself; close at hand was the rising of a glorious constellation of genius, which was to claim for German writers a rank amongst the classics of the world: Kleist,* the soldier poet, who defended his mother tongue, by making it the medium for noble thoughts, and his country, by laying down for it his heroic life, was one of the forerunners of the advent of Goethe and Schiller; and henceforward a long list of brilliant names graces the annals of German literature.

But there was another strange feature apparent amidst the prevailing enlightenment and intelligence of the time. Morality

* Kleist was wounded at Künersdorf; he was plundered and stripped as he lay in a trench; he remained all night in his blood, half covered by water; a party of the enemy then took compassion on him, and gave him careful tendance, but he died of his wounds; he was buried with funeral honours, an officer in the Austrian service laying his own sword upon the coffin.

had literally taken French leave. No one knew where to find her in Germany, all agreed that she did not exist in Berlin.* Frederic the Great did not much care for that. He had laughed at both religion and morality in his writings; if the plants liked to grow in his lands, it was all very well; he would not interfere with them, nor would he cultivate them. But religion and morality are delicate plants, and will not grow without culture, whilst all sorts of noxious and filthy weeds soon spring up and choke them; and so it was in Prussia, especially in Berlin. It was fashionable to be irreligious, sceptical, atheistic—the King was all these: it was equally fashionable to be immoral, sensual, frightfully vicious; if the King was not all these, at least he did not disapprove of his subjects being so. But by-and-by resulted a consequence which Frederic had never dreamed of. There arose an emergency, at the time when Austria endeavoured to add Bavaria to her possessions, and Frederic found it good policy to maintain the cause of the helpless heir-at-law, which rendered it necessary for his armies once more to take the field. The old King was ready as ever to lead his troops, but his troops were not ready as ever to be led; they were either inefficient old men, or else effeminate young ones, equally inefficient; they fell off, and deserted in multitudes. Frederic was amazed, confounded, enraged; † could this be the army at the head of which he had performed such wonders?

With all his genius and his wisdom, Frederic the Great was not prepared to find, that, having sown carefully, and watered diligently the seeds of infidelity and vice, the plants had sprung up luxuriantly, and brought forth an hundredfold, corruption, effeminacy, disease, and all other rank and baleful offspring.

So Frederic grew more distrustful of, and disgusted with mankind, because he had helped to make them worse than they were before, and betook himself more than ever to the society of

* See on this subject Malmesbury's Despatches, Forster's "Neuere und Neueste Geschichte;" Vehse's "Preussischen Hof;" Von Cöln's "Vertraute Briefe," &c.

† See "Vertraute Briefe."

his pet dogs; sentimentalised over them when they died, and wanted to be buried with them.* Doubts seemed to have crossed the King's mind from time to time, whether he might not have been a better and a happier man, and whether Prussia might not have been a better and a happier country, if he had been contented to live like a Christian and a human being, the husband of a loving Christian wife; but he silenced the doubts, and those who aroused them by saying, "It is too late now."† And so, worn out by old age, hard service, gout and dropsy, and, as he wrote to his sister Amelia, "forsaken by all the world,"‡ Frederic the Great passed his latter days, cheered by no hope beyond the grave to which he was declining, a much less enviable man than the aged pauper in the workhouse, who finds that "the Lord hath made his bed in his sickness," and knows

* The King always looked with suspicion on any one at whose entrance his dogs barked or growled; balls for them to play with lay about in his apartments; the curtains and furniture were always in tatters from the dogs delighting to tear them; they had a coach to themselves when the King travelled, and an attendant who remonstrated with them courteously by the title of "Sie," when they were unruly, as "Seyn Sie doch Artig Alcmène. Bellen Sie nicht so Biche!" When any of them died, they were buried on the terrace at Sans Souci; and Frederic desired that he might be laid beside them.

† Madame de Kanneberg, the successor of Madame de Camas, remonstrated with Frederic on his never showing his thankfulness to the Almighty by going to a church. "It is," said she, "the only thing wanting to complete the reverence with which your Majesty's subjects regard you." He replied, "Perhaps I have been wrong; perhaps, had I formerly had my present experience, I should have traced out a different plan from that which I have followed, but it is now too late; any change would only produce grievous consequences, and no good could result from it." Once also, when he gave his consent to the marriage of one of his officers, he spoke to him kindly, saying, "I too have a heart, but one must make sacrifices when one is a king."—*Thiebault*. Frederic always showed great respect for sincere piety in others. The Queen's gentle but firm persistence in her religious duties, and her unswerving faith, were amongst the causes of his esteem for her. Once, too, when he used some scoffing words to old Ziethen, about the Sacrament, the venerable warrior stood up, bowed before the King, and said that though he had fought for him, and was ready to lay his grey head at his feet, yet he would not hear his Saviour blasphemed in his presence. The King rose from his seat, took Ziethen's hand in one of his, and, laying the other on his shoulder, said, "Happy Ziethen, I wish I could believe as you do; I respect your faith, hold fast by it. This shall not happen again."

‡ Malmesbury's Despatches.

that the holy angels will bear his spirit into the rest of them "who sleep in Jesus."

Thus, unattended in his last moments by any female hand—for "no woman approached his death-bed,"* and she who should have received his last breath and closed his eyes on this world, was left to suffer alone, at this unjust privation of even the last sad privileges of affection,—uncheered by religious consolation, covered with filthy rags, which he would not allow to be changed, Frederic, the greatest King of Prussia, died in the arms of a hired servant, and was succeeded by an heir who squandered his treasures in riotous living, turned over the government to worthless favourites, and prepared the way for the dismemberment, in the next generation, of the kingdom which it had cost so much blood and treasure to consolidate.

Very different were the last days of Frederic's gentle Queen, who, like just Lot, "vexed her righteous soul from day to day with the unlawful deeds" of those around her, and who interceded for her people unceasingly, that a better and purer time might arise. She lived, indeed, to see the dawning of that better time, but it needed many a stormy blast of adversity to sweep away the pestilential moral atmosphere which reigned in Prussia, and to substitute a freer and more wholesome current of thought, principle and action, in its room.

The death of the husband, who, estranged, cold and isolated in his selfishness, as he chose to keep himself, had ever been to her the one star of her horizon, the thought of whom she had cherished so fondly even in the midst of the most cruel neglect, was a dreadful blow to her, although it had been long expected, for she had loved too well and too warmly, to lose without feeling that a dreary blank had been left in her life; but she was comforted by the warm sympathy of her family and of her people, to all of whom, says Spalding, she was "so dear in her affliction." How lovingly her thoughts still dwelt upon the me-

*. Wraxall's "Memoirs of My Own Time."

mory of her dead husband, and how she strove to screen him from reproach for his neglect of her, is shown by the letter, which, nine years after his death, she wrote to her nephew, Frederic William, his successor, in which she says, "Frederic the Great would have been adored for his great qualities had he been only a private individual; all great Princes might take example from him; he reigned like the true father of his people. He was a true friend himself, but he had many false ones, who, under the mask of attachment, separated him from those who were devoted to him heart and soul; yet these deceitful persons caused him sorrow when he discovered their falsehood, and he rendered justice to his true friends without bringing them into notice, lest he should expose them to persecution. He was generous and beneficent, he maintained his position without *hauteur*, and in society he was like a private gentleman." She saw her husband for the last time on the birthday of Prince Henry, the 18th of January; Frederic's death took place on the 17th of August, 1786. He left an express provision for the Queen in his will, desiring that, in addition to the income which she already received, her revenue should be augmented by ten thousand Thalers annually, and that she should be provided with wine, fire-wood, game and a constant residence at her pleasure in the castle; he also required that his nephew should render to the "Queen, my wife," "all such deference and respect as befit the widow of his uncle, and the character of a Princess who has never deviated from the paths of virtue." Her life was, perhaps, scarcely so retired after her husband's death as it had been before. The new Queen was unfortunately wanting in some of that tact which is especially necessary in so important a station as hers, and "the Queen Dowager, who, by her circumspection and natural dignity," says Mirabeau,* "was of more importance than the Queen regnant," was often required to disentangle the twisted threads of court etiquette, or smoothe the ruffled dignity of some diplomatic functionary,

* "Histoire Secrète de la Cour de Berlin."

when Queen Louisa had unwittingly involved the one, or wounded the other.

Besides such calls as these, the closest attention to the regulation of her own household, and the exercise of the most active benevolence, filled up Elizabeth Christina's days of quiet usefulness.* The French colony, says Erman, looked to her as their benefactress, for it was through her intercession, and by her hand, that all benefits reached them. Her own attendants were the constant recipients of her kindness; her worthless old chamberlain, Baron Müller, who gamed away all his pension and his salary, and then begged, borrowed, almost stole, that he might still game; who said that if an angel offered him health and youth on condition that he would play no more, he should have gamed on nevertheless, could not tire out her kindness by all his follies and all his vices. "Nay," said she, when advised to dismiss him, "who will take care of him if I do not?" So she received his pension, bought his clothes, and allowed him still a little pocket-money for the indulgence of his inveterate habit.† She was always pleased to see the people enjoying

* Spalding says of her, after her death, "that her memory will always be blessed as a touching example of the noblest mental qualities, the most enlightened and lively piety, and the most wonderfully active benevolence." She regularly spent more than half her income in charity; the anecdote of the pearl necklace well illustrates the self-denial, by means of which she was enabled to do this. The Queen as a young woman was particularly partial to pearls as an ornament. A very beautiful necklace was once sent for her inspection by her jeweller. She much admired it, and wished to purchase it. One day in a leisure moment she ordered it to be brought out to look at. "It is very beautiful; I think I must have it," said she. "Why not, your Majesty?" said her ladies. "Surely you who do so much for others are entitled sometimes to indulge your own tastes." "No, no; take it away, so that I may not see it; it pleases me, but I can do a great deal of good with the money it would cost." She would never allow any one to wait who required her help, if it was possible to avoid it, saying, that "late help was often no help at all."

† Another of her attendants, the Obermarschall, Baron Von Voss, seems to have furnished much amusement to the Court by his stupidity. Malmesbury says that when about to usher a stranger into the Queen's presence his constant address was, "Perhaps Her Majesty will speak to you; in that case you must answer her; and do not forget to make her a bow each time." Morian, of whom Malmesbury relates, that when Sir Charles Wil-

themselves, and gave particular orders to the gatekeeper to admit them to her gardens. If the promenades were not, as usual, thronged with citizens on Sundays or holidays, she was uneasy until she had sent down to see that the man had laid no restrictions upon their admission. It is pleasant to find her at the advanced age of sixty-seven, replanting the woods at Schönhausen, where the trees had been felled to sell, as timber, during the strain caused by war upon the finances, because, as she said, "though I shall never see the trees grow up, it will please me to watch the young plants, and to think that it will once more be as charming as it used to be, after I am gone." With the same kind feeling, and desire to improve the country and the people, she settled a little colony of Bohemian emigrants at Schönholz, near Schönhausen, with dwellings rent free, on condition that they should work in her gardens one day in each week.

Beloved and respected by all, the latter part of Elizabeth Christina's pilgrimage was peaceful and happy. She was sought both by young and old; no young couple about the Court esteemed the day of their union one of entirely happy auspices, unless the good old Queen was present at the wedding; no christening was duly performed unless her prayers joined with those of the pastor and parents, over the new-made Christian. She rejoiced at the letter that her great nephew, Frederic William, the crown Prince, sent her, to tell her how fair and gentle a Princess he was shortly to bring home as his bride; and when Louisa of Mecklenburg Strelitz had arrived, and the marriage was about to take place, all the company went to the apartment of the aged Queen, to escort her to the White Hall,

liams wrote him a letter recommending Lord Essex to his attention, and concluding, "Vous pourrez être sur que ce n'est pas lui qui a eu la tête coupée dans le temps de la Reine Elizabeth," and who accordingly presented his lordship to the Queen with the words "Lord Essex, but I assure your Majesty it is not the same who was beheaded in the reign of Queen Elizabeth!" was not Obermarschall to Elizabeth Christina, as the "Despatches" state, but to her predecessor, Sophia Dorothea.—See Vehse.

where, seated, in consideration of her great age, she beheld and blessed the union of her children, as she considered them. She even joined afterwards in the celebration of the torch-dance, though she begged to be excused from the succeeding balls and festivities, on the score of her infirmities. She lived to see only the beginning of that great continental convulsion, of which the French Revolution was the first fearful spasm. She wrote to her nephew, Frederic William II., then in camp at Frankfort, having recently heard of the murder of the French monarch—"8th Feb., 1793. I am still stunned by the frightful catastrophe which has taken place in Paris; it is unheard of that men should have been found atrocious enough to pass such a sentence not only on an innocent man, but on their king, and that no defence should have been listened to. I cannot think of it without shuddering; I hope and pray most earnestly that God will assist your Majesty and your allies to bring these maniacs to reason, and that an advantageous peace may result." On the 5th of March of the same year she thus again writes to her nephew—"I must do the people of Berlin the justice to say that they generally show themselves patriots, and truly devoted to you as their sovereign. One observes that the former opponents of government are no more; people are patriotically disposed, and all is tranquil."

After the return of the King and Princes from the French campaign, no further trouble chequered the peaceful days of Elizabeth Christina until the intelligence of the death of Prince Louis * reached her, and then she began to weep, saying, "I have lived long enough. I have much to be thankful for; but now my longer life would be but of little service to myself and others. It will be better with me above." She was ill but a few days. Her death was as calm and peaceful as her life had been. On the day of her decease she bestowed her blessing upon her attendants, saying affectionately, "I know you will not forget me." On the 13th day of January, 1797, (the anni-

* Prince Louis died Dec. 28, 1796.

versary of the death of her sister, the Princess of Prussia,) at the age of eighty-one, full of years and of honour, this humble Queen and gentle woman went to her rest at length. There were few dry eyes in Berlin that day. Küster, in his funeral sermon, said of her, "The voice of impartial truth renders the deepest and most affectionate tribute of veneration to the long course of truly majestic and noble deeds which her life displayed. I have been an observant witness of her conduct for fifty years, and, from year to year, my reverence for her has increased, and I thankfully praise God when I see how much good has been effected by Her Majesty's example and active exertions, both for the religion, education, hearts, manners and happiness of all classes;" whilst Spalding says of her that she was "not only a Queen,—a great Queen,—*our* Queen,—but a Queen after God's own heart." With these testimonies to her worth and piety I terminate the memoir of Elizabeth Christina.

LIFE OF
FREDERICA LOUISA,

FIFTH QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.

UPON the rupture of the crown Prince's marriage in 1769, a fresh alliance was immediately sought for him amongst the Princesses of the various houses of Germany. It was said that he would have preferred his cousin, the daughter of the Margrave of Schwedt, one of the most beautiful women in Germany,* but that the lady declined the honour of the connection. Another cousin was then proposed to him, Sophia Albertina, sister of the King of Sweden.† Here, however, the objection arose with himself, for he felt no prepossession in her favour, and desired that proposals might not be made.‡ At length the Princess Frederica Louisa of Hesse Darmstadt was selected as the future crown Princess of Prussia. She was the daughter of one of the few women to whom Frederic the Great accorded the honour of his admiration and esteem; to her talents he paid the most flattering tribute, calling her "the ornament and admiration of the age," "a woman in sex, but a man in intellect;"§ the Princess's father was Louis IX., Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt. But though Frederic estimated so highly the character of the Landgravine Caroline, he did not regard her daughter with any measure of the same sentiments. The

* Afterwards Landgravine of Hesse Cassel.

† Daughter of Frederic's sister, Ulrica, Queen of Sweden. She became Abbess of Quedlinburg after the death of her aunt, the Princess Amelia, 1787.

‡ Wraxall.

§ He erected a memorial to her in the Schloss-garten at Darmstadt, with the inscription, "*Fœmina sexu, ingenio vir.*"

fresh marriage was solemnized so speedily after the invalidation of the old one, that the sight of the Princess Louisa recalled to his mind the disgrace of his unhappy niece, and excited a comparison between that Princess and her successor by no means flattering to the latter, for she was possessed neither of the beauty, the grace, nor the talents, which had made Elizabeth of Brunswick so great a favourite with him. Nevertheless, she is described as having been endowed with qualities of such sterling value as ought to have atoned for all mere external deficiencies. Wraxall says of her, "She is an amiable, virtuous, and pleasing woman, possessing, indeed, neither the personal attractions, nor the graces of her predecessor, but exempt from her errors and defects. She is of the middle size, her countenance agreeable, though not handsome, her manners easy and engaging, her character estimable and formed to excite universal respect." Those who knew her best, and were most constantly in her society, described her as a person of rational and sensible views, though not gifted with brilliant talents; "her understanding was solid, and her conversation was highly pleasing."* She was still very young, being only eighteen at the time of her marriage in July, 1769. The fate of the unfortunate prisoner at Küstrin did not afford a happy augury of Louisa's domestic future, and from what has been already stated of the crown Prince's character and habits, it may be inferred that he was not likely to prove a good husband; and, as Frederic II., moreover, made it sufficiently apparent that he had no friendly feeling towards her, having more than once mortified her in a public manner, and carefully avoided showing her any of those marks of favour and kindness which Elizabeth of Brunswick had enjoyed,† some idea may be formed of the difficult part which the crown Princess was called upon to play. Her husband—had the Prussians chosen their kings as the Israelites of old selected Saul, the son of Kish,—might still have been selected to rule over the kingdom, for he was a head and shoulders taller than the rest

* Wraxall's "Memoirs of the Court of Berlin," &c.

† Ibid.

of the people; but, goodness of person excepted, he was no way fitted to be the ruler of a great nation. He was wholly given up to pleasure, and that of the lowest description; so debased, indeed, were his pursuits and his associates, that some persons even suspected the King of Prussia of wishing to be followed by an unworthy successor, in order to endear his own memory to his people.*

Malmesbury describes him as more resembling a stout grenadier than a great prince in his person, with nothing denoting talent in his countenance or manner; his bearing was deficient in dignity, and he was reserved and silent; some attributed this to the restraint under which he was kept by his uncle, who despised him; some to the fact that he had nothing to say, since, even in the company which he most affected, where, amongst his low associates he forgot that he was a prince, he only testified his own hilarity by urging them to become more uproarious. His faults, however, all seem to have been of the head, and not of the heart; he was naturally affectionate and kindly disposed, and would not wilfully have inflicted pain on any one, but so greatly, say the "*Vertraute Briefe*," "did his body outweigh his intellect, that his passions ran away with his judgment." He was incapable of exercising the smallest self-control over his inclinations. Weakly good-natured, he allowed those to whom he was attached, to rule him completely; and unfortunately, they were generally persons who made use of their power to serve their own interests, and not those of the country.

During the war of the Bavarian succession, it seemed as if there might have been the materials for a soldier in him at least. Frederic was pleased with his conduct of the troops entrusted to his command in the retreat; he even embraced him publicly, saying, "I no longer look upon you as my nephew, but as my son, you have done all that I could have done—all that could have been expected of the most experienced general

* See Vehse.

in your place." But the King and his successor were men of such totally different characters in all respects, that no good understanding could long exist between them. The crown Prince was allowed but a slender income, his irregular habits rendered his expenses very heavy and he was constantly in the utmost perplexity for money. The King was well aware of these circumstances, and the auguries he drew from them, as to the fate of Prussia under his nephew's administration were not far from the truth. He said to Hoym, his minister in Silesia, shortly before his death, "Farewell, I shall see you no more. I will tell you how things will go after my death. It will be a jovial life at Court, my nephew will squander the treasure and ruin the army. The women will govern, and the State will founder. Then go you to the King and say 'This will not do, the treasure belongs to the country and not to you,' and if he is angry tell him that I commanded it. Perhaps this may be of use, for he has not a bad heart—do you hear?" But Hoym was a politic man as well as his old master, and he heard, but did not administer this legacy of advice.*

Frederic William II. was forty-two years of age when he ascended the throne in 1786—a time of life at which he might have been supposed to have outlived the follies of his youth. Indeed, for a time people began to think that he had done so; he forsook his old haunts, punctually attended to business, rising at four, and retiring to rest at ten. Mirabeau writes in two of his despatches, "If he perseveres, he will be the only example of a man who has conquered a habit of thirty years' standing. In this case he has a great character, which will outwit us all." But this fair beginning was but a delusive and transitory appearance. There was no real change in the King; he soon fell back into his former habits, spent his days and

* Frederic the Great appointed Hoym to be his minister in Silesia, partly on account of his insinuating manners, which gained him much favour with the women; the flourishing condition of Silesia showed the wisdom of the selection in other respects.—"Vertraute Briefe."

nights upon his pleasures, and allowed the government to take its chance, quietly turning over to his favourite, Bischofswerder, any impertinent claims of business, or public affairs, which might have interfered with his pursuits—and *such* pursuits they were! For many years his principal female favourite had been Madame Rietz; she had pleased the crown Prince as Wilhelmina Encke when very young; he had undertaken to educate her himself; he had written a promise never to be separated from her, in his own blood. Frederic II. insisted, either that his nephew should give her up, or that she should be married, as a cloak to the scandal which his connection with her excited: a man was found vile enough to lend his name for such a purpose, and she became Madame Rietz. Rietz was a mean, servile wretch, kicked and cuffed, or treated with undue familiarity, as suited the Prince's humour, and retaliating upon all whom he dared to bully.* Madame Rietz is described by Malmesbury as being "large in her person, loose in her attire, and spirited in her looks;" giving, in short, the idea of a perfect bacchante. Von Cölln says that her person was "faultlessly beautiful;" she maintained her empire over the King throughout the whole of his life, perhaps because she seldom let him feel the rein. For her alone does Frederic William seem ever to have entertained anything like a true affection; yet he was by no means constant even to her. At the time of his accession he was paying most assiduous court to the Fräulein Julie von Voss, niece of the Queen Dowager's Oberhofmeister. She was not handsome, neither was she clever;† her chief characteristic was a sort of Anglo-mania, which made her think it

* A story is told of his once indulging in this propensity when on a journey; he railed and swore at everything and everybody at an inn on the road, where he stopped at night, to the great terror of the servants, when suddenly the landlord's deep, bass voice was heard exclaiming, "Who wants to give orders here besides me? The devil fly away with him! *Will* the shoeblack get into his carriage?" Not another sound was heard from the doughty Rietz; he crept softly into his carriage, and there remained trembling in the dark, until horses were brought, for him to continue his journey.—"Vertraute Briefe."

† Mirabeau—Dampmartin.

“absurd to be a German,” and gained her the name of “Miss Bessy” at Court. Her attraction for the King, was—that she received his advances coldly; but she was persuaded by Count Finckenstein, who wished to place her as a relative of his own, in the influential post now held by Madame de Rietz, that it was her duty to “sacrifice herself for the country,” if by so doing she could withdraw the King from the society of the unprincipled persons who now surrounded him. At length, having salved her conscience by the stipulation that the Queen’s consent should be gained to a left-handed marriage with the King, Fräulein von Voss consented to listen to his suit, and to become Frederic William’s fourth living wife,* although he was no Mussulman, and Prussia was not a country where polygamy was recognised by law.

It seems strange that it should be necessary to commence the memoir of one of the Queens of Prussia by the introduction of characters such as these; but, unfortunately, their history is so mixed up with that of the Queen that it is impossible to separate them. With these, and other rivals in her husband’s affections, it may be imagined how little power was enjoyed by the legitimate consort of Frederic William II. It is true, as Wraxall remarks, that if Louisa “had not captivated the affections, or secured the constancy of her husband, she possessed at least his esteem, and received from him every proof of respect.” Yet each of the women, who, for the time being, made a slave of the sensual King, obtained far more influence, both over him and over the government, than the Queen was ever, for a moment, allowed to dream of exercising. Mirabeau says that “no Queen of Prussia—of all Queens the least influential—was ever so un-influential” as the consort of Frederic William II. During the long period between her marriage and her husband’s accession, she had constantly resided at Potsdam, in the most monotonous and wearisome seclusion, neglected by her husband, slighted by the King, and seldom allowed even the diversion of

* Mirabeau.

a visit to Berlin. Her position was little if at all improved after she became Queen. At the time when she held her first drawing-room she had not seen the King for six weeks—not on account of absence, for they were constantly within a few miles of each other, nor of misunderstanding or intentional unkindness, for he did not intend to wound her, but she was accustomed to see but little of him as a general rule.

Her eldest son, Frederic William, was born in 1770. This event gave her some little importance for the time being; her mother was with her upon the occasion. We find the Landgravine writing to the King of the infant's beauty and precocious intelligence, and relating his early juvenile exploits. The child became a favourite with his great uncle as he grew older, and he liked to have him near him; one day, in his play, the boy threw his ball by accident several times on to the King's writing-table; it was returned once or twice; at last Frederic put it in his pocket. The child asked for it, but received no answer; he then said, in a determined tone, "*Will* you give me my ball or not?" The King gave back his ball and said, well pleased, "You will not let Silesia be taken from you."

After his birth his mother soon sank back into her former unimportance, and thus matters stood on the death of the King. Almost the first moments of her accession to the title of Queen were distracted by the above-mentioned demand for her consent to her husband's taking Fräulein von Voss as his second, or rather *semi*-legitimate, wife. It is easy to imagine the domestic position of a wife whose husband would dare to allow such a proposition to be made to her as that on which the *quasi* virtue of Fräulein von Voss insisted.

The unhappy Queen had no choice save to submit, but it was a hard struggle, and it was long before she could bring her mind to it. The Duke of Saxe Weimar, her brother-in-law,* was entrusted with the honourable office of negotiator, and it was observed that the King, after having received him with

* He had married her sister Louisa.

great cordiality, gradually began to treat him with coldness and disfavour; it was supposed, therefore, that he was either an unfaithful or an unsuccessful ambassador.* At length, worn out and disgusted beyond endurance, Louisa exclaimed, laughing bitterly, "Oh, yes! I will give my consent, but it shall be dearly paid for!" She therefore stipulated that the King should pay her debts, which were considerable, amounting to one hundred thousand crowns.†

During the progress of this disgraceful affair, the German theatre gave "*Inez de Castro*," for many nights in succession; it was observed that the Queen, each time, retired during the performance of the fourth act, where the Prince makes vows of passionate love to the maid of honour.—People wondered whether this was accident or design on the part of Her Majesty! "It is difficult to determine," says Mirabeau, "on account of the turbulent and versatile, but not particularly weak, character of this Princess, whether she acted thus intentionally or not."

The palace was in a wretched state of confusion, as may be supposed; the King left his duties unperformed, and every one else, even down to the lowest functionaries, thought himself, privileged to do the same, for the disorganization being radical, there was no one head to look after the rest. The Queen's household was as ill-managed as every other detail of the whole administration; her husband had annoyed her by contravening every arrangement she wished to make with regard to it, on first assuming the rank of Queen. Her income was only fifty-one thousand crowns per annum; she was generous in her tastes and somewhat profuse in her habits; this sum was therefore wholly inadequate to defray her expenses; sometimes she was without even the most common necessities. Mirabeau relates, that upon one occasion there was no wood to supply the fires in her apartments; the steward of her household had recourse to the same officer in the King's establishment, but he replied that his own supply was so limited that

* Mirabeau's "*Hist. Secrète*."

† Ibid.

he could not spare any. Thus harassed by petty annoyances such as these, and constantly involved in pecuniary difficulties in her own necessary expenditure, whilst her husband was squandering at least thirty thousand Thalers annually on one mistress, and allotting a considerable income to another, she tried in vain to shut her eyes upon the causes which were rendering her wretched. Under such circumstances it is not strange that Queen Louisa should have sometimes failed in the graces and courtesies which should have embellished her demeanour in the Court circle. Mirabeau makes harsh mention* of the unintentional offence given by her on her first Court day, to Monsieur d'Esterno, the French minister. The Princess Frederica of Prussia, her step-daughter, had arranged the card-tables upon this occasion according to the received etiquette, that the Queen should play only with subjects; but on being asked to name the gentlemen who should form her table, forgetful of these stringent rules, Louisa named the Austrian and Russian ministers. Monsieur d'Esterno, considering that his own exclusion ought to be resented as an insult to his country, declined to seat himself at the Princess's table, and left the room. Many were the consultations held on this important conjuncture, for it was feared that the King would be very angry. Mirabeau proposed that recourse should be had to the Queen Dowager, but she was in the first days of her mourning for her husband, and could not be asked to hold an assembly so soon. The Queen therefore wrote a letter addressed to Count Finckenstein, but intended to be read to M. d'Esterno, in which she expressed her regret, desiring that her "excuses" should be made to him, and begging that the King might not be informed of what had taken place; but it was thought insufficient, the offence having been public, that the excuses should be private. The ceremony of receiving homage shortly afterwards ensued, and the affair passed off.

Unfortunately, amidst her many domestic discomforts, the

* He calls her "the most *gauche* Princess in Europe.—*Hist. Secrète.*

Queen had never learned to take refuge in the society and education of her children, of whom she had now six, four sons and two daughters; she was even much to blame for her neglect of their education. The "*Vertraute Briefe*" give a sad account of the mismanagement of these children; I quote the passage:—"Frederic William III. received the very worst of educations; so beyond all measure bad as only that of a crown Prince can be. His father troubled himself more about his illegitimate than his legitimate children.* They were left to their mother. She, constantly embroiled with her finances, often did not see them for days together; they were therefore left to the care of their attendants and of their misanthropic Hofmeister Benisch." This man was an irritable invalid, and if the young Princes ventured to become at all lively in their amusements, he would exclaim peevishly—"You will kill me with your noise! how I am tormented! would that I had never been born!" and the like. Nevertheless, though placed under such unwholesome and cramping restrictions, both of mind and body, the young crown Prince, being gifted by nature with the most singular sincerity and sweetness of disposition, developed, as he advanced in years, a straightforward simplicity of character, which not even the shyness caused by the wretched system of constraint to which he was subjected, could subvert, and a depth of affection, which the harshness of Benisch himself could not prevent from clinging to him, and which no neglect on her part could alienate from his mother.

The attachment also which subsisted between himself and his next brother Louis was something beautiful to look upon. They

* The sum allotted for the maintenance of the household of the royal children was, like the rest of the arrangements for his legitimate family, exceedingly limited. Frederic William III. used to tell his children, when they received handsome birthday presents, of the less costly gifts which pleased him in his own childhood. "I used," said he, "to have a pot of mignonette worth three halfpence on my birthday, and when Benisch wished to reward me, he would take me to a public garden and give me a pennyworth, or if it was a grand occasion, two pennyworth of cherries."

were always together as children, and when they grew up they were still inseparable. We find entries in the crown Prince's childish diary of how, after lessons, he and his brother "went to mamma, and were sent to play in the balcony," where he related stories to amuse the younger child; of going "with mamma in the carriage to a review," &c.; but still the child was too young to understand his mother's trials, and his loving disposition afforded her then but little comfort; but by degrees, as he grew up, she learned insensibly to rely upon the quiet strength and dignity of character which he possessed, and her son became her best support under some of the heaviest trials which she was ever called upon to submit to, towards the end of her husband's life.

Towards the latter part of the reign of Frederic II., a singular, rather than new element had been actively at work in men's minds throughout a great part of the civilized world, especially in Germany. This element was superstition, which at that time, as has been the case at intervals both before and since, seemed to become a sort of mental epidemic. This was the time when Cagliostro and the Count St. Germain were exciting so great a sensation in England, and other countries, and when Schröpfer was raising spirits at Dresden, to the terror of the presumptuous Prince who had dared to question his power to make the dead obey the invocation of the living.* Probably

* Schröpfer had been obliged to leave Leipzig, having offended Prince Charles of Saxony. He then betook himself to Dresden, and his fame spread far and wide as an alchemist and theurgist. Prince Charles became curious, and apologising for his former treatment of the ghost-seer applied to him to show him a proof of his power. After much apparent unwillingness Schröpfer consented. The spirit summoned was to be that of the Chevalier de Saxe, the uncle of Prince Charles. The Prince and his attendants were then admitted into a darkened room, the doors and windows were carefully secured; the adept retired to a corner, fell on his knees, and began his incantations. Loud and dreadful noises were shortly heard, as if in the air outside; this was followed by a sort of musical sound like that produced by musical glasses: this Schröpfer said proceeded from his good spirits; then arose fearful yells and shrieks, and finally the door burst open, and a sort of mysterious dark ball or globe rolled in, in the midst of which, the apparition of a countenance like that of the Chevalier de Saxe

the recoil of men's minds from the overstrained tendency to scepticism and infidelity, which had lately been prevalent in Prussia, may account for the fact, that in this country, an error of a precisely opposite nature gained so firm a footing. This was shown by the formation of various secret orders and societies, all inculcating more or less of mysticism, and belief in the intervention of supernatural powers, and accompanied by various mysterious ceremonies, cabalistic signs and strange-sounding titles. The principal of these secret societies was that of the Brethren of the Rosy Cross. They professed to derive the wisdom and supernatural powers to which they laid claim, from Enoch, Moses and Zoroaster, who, by means of the Knights of the Temple, had transmitted it to their founder, Christian Rosenkreutz. "They boasted," says Förster, quoting from Nicolai, that "their doctrines chained heaven to earth, and re-opened the barred road to paradise," and that the highest representative of their order was the "master of nature reposing in God the All-father." They affirmed that they were governed by secret heads or fathers, who bore mysterious names, lived in the most exalted purity, and enjoyed the power of constant communion with the spirits of the departed, not to mention that of making gold, and producing a wonderful elixir which was capable of restoring to old age the vigour and appearance of youth.

The Jesuits, then in a state of abeyance, made use of this order to carry out their own views, and to endeavour to regain some portion of their former power. The Freemasons, to whose society both Frederic II. and Frederic William II. belonged, showed a tendency to adopt many of the mystical tenets of

was visible, and a hollow, angry voice demanded, "Was wolltest du mit mir Carl?" Prince Charles forgot his incredulity, fell on his knees, and called on Heaven for mercy. All his attendants were equally terrified; they besought Schröpfer to dismiss the apparition. He feigned to be unable to do so. At last, after repeated exorcisms, the spirit vanished; but hardly had it done so, before it again burst into the room as before. Schröpfer at last, however, succeeded in dismissing it.—*Wraxall's "Court of Berlin,"* &c.

the Rosierucians. A subdivision arose, which combined the Jesuitical principle of implicit obedience to the secret fathers, with the Rosierucian Freemasonry. At the head of this party were the Duke of Brunswick and his brother Ferdinand. This was the aristocratic and exclusive section, which was regulated by Jesuitical regulations, and directed by Jesuit "secret fathers," without being aware of the fact. In complete opposition to this sect the order of Illuminati, which was professedly democratic, excluding princes and rulers from membership, set itself up to teach enlightenment and liberality of sentiment to all, and especially to the middle and lower classes. This society, as well as many others of a similar kind, probably owed its rise to the manner in which Frederic the Great had entirely excluded the bürger class from all share in the government, thus leaving a large proportion of the intellectual element in his kingdom, either to run to waste, or to strike out a new path for itself, which it was thus beginning to do. But so *very* liberal were the opinions which this order professed, that certain rulers began to fear they might at length include not only the institutions of religion, but also those of temporal sovereignty, in their ideas of illiberal restrictions upon the amelioration and improvement of the human race. The Illuminati were therefore accused of treasonable practices and their order abolished, whilst the brothers of the Rosy Cross became very powerful.* To this society belonged King Frederic William's chief friend and confidant, Bischofswerder, and his associate, Wöllner; and it was through their order that these two men chiefly influenced the King. Bischofswerder had been a follower of the Rosierucian Schröpfer, who had made a disciple of the Duke of Courland, and creditors of a great many persons of less note, and who, having taught Bischofswerder his most wonderful secrets,—

* See Förster, "Neuere und Neueste Preuss. Gesch." Vehse, &c. I have given a short account of the distinction between the societies of Rosierucians and Illuminati, because they have sometimes been confounded. Malmesbury speaks of the King of Prussia as belonging to the latter order, whereas in fact he was a disciple of one of a very different tendency.

how to obtain the elixir of youth ; the manner of rendering the spirits of the departed visible to the living, &c., &c., assembled all his most curious followers and most urgent creditors at Rosenthal, informed them that he was about, before their eyes, to betake himself to the world of spirits, whence he would return to bring wisdom to the former and money to the latter, and—shot himself through the head !

Bischofswerder had become acquainted with the King whilst he was still crown Prince,* and had been high in his esteem ever since. He was not a man of great talent, nor of a malignant disposition ; but he was ambitious, although not in the usual way which leads men to grasp at office ; he was not an avaricious man, but his wife possessed that failing, and he was only her agent in many things which made him unpopular.† But he had possessed himself of the key to the King's character, and now exercised an extraordinary influence over him ; for “out of sensuality combined with mysticism, nets so subtle may be woven, as to be altogether indestructible to weak minds.”‡ In the meshes of this subtle net, the favourite had contrived to entangle the weak mind of Frederic William most helplessly. The principal use which he made of this influence, at first, was to attempt to displace Madame de Rietz, who had more power over the King than he liked, and who laughed at the Rosicrucians and their mysticism. Once he seemed to be upon the point of obtaining his end. The means he employed were very ingenious ; Frederic William had hitherto been only a neophyte of the order of the Rosy Cross, Bischofswerder now promised to introduce him to the spiritual world. Förster relates that the Prince was summoned one day from the side of his beloved Wilhelmina, by Bischofswerder, who conducted him to a lonely house in a remote part of the town. Here he was placed in a

* In the war of the Bavarian succession.

† As for instance, in enriching himself with the plunder of the confiscated estates in Poland, like Wöllner and others of the avaricious Prussian ministry.

‡ Schlosser ; see Vehse.

darkened chamber, where strange sweet perfumes, and low sounds of wild, weird music stole upon the senses, and lent an air of mystery to the scene. Here the Prince was asked with whose spirit he would wish to hold communion, and suggestions were at the same time artfully made to guide his selection to the shade of either Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher Leibnitz, or the great Elector, for which three personages suitable apparel, &c., had been prepared; but if he had not been content to behold the spirit of either of these great men, with rare ingenuity the performers were ready to make the same wig, crown and robes, serve for Louis XIV., Charlemagne, or Aristotle!

Having expressed his wish to hold intercourse with the spirit of his great ancestor, after the performance of many cabalistic ceremonies, accompanied by formulas of conjuration, of uncouth sound, the Prince was left alone for a considerable time, to await the appearance of the spirit. Frederic William was physically brave, but, like many men of his type, spiritual terrors daunted him completely; his nerves were therefore wrought up to the highest state of tension by this period of suspense, and when a shadowy form gradually developed itself before his eyes, his courage gave way altogether; he had been told that he might question the illustrious shade, but his trembling lips refused to frame a sound; and when the spectre proceeded to utter, in hollow tones, harsh reproaches upon his mode of life, and commands to forsake his paramour Madame de Rietz, his strength failed, his knees knocked together, a cold sweat bathed his forehead, and Bischofswerder was obliged to leave his post behind the scenes, and conduct him half-dead with terror to his carriage; he asked to be taken back to his beloved, to recover from his exhaustion, but Bischofswerder would not listen to his request; it was now night, and he was conveyed to the Assembly of the Brotherhood, where he was induced to take the oaths, and promised to give up Madame de Rietz. This promise was not kept very long, but it greatly incensed that lady against Bischofswerder. She endeavoured frequently to over-

throw him, but this was the only point upon which her influence was insufficient to rule Frederic William ; he always replying—"No, no, not Bischofswerder ; I will not listen to that."* At last she dared not even mention him. Each finding the other's position impregnable, the two adversaries changed their tactics, and made an alliance. Their power over the King then became boundless.

During the last reign the King was everything, the ministers nothing. The case was exactly reversed in the new administration—the King was nothing, the ministry all-powerful. Hertzberg was the leader of the Prussian Cabinet during the first part of Frederic William's reign ; he was a man of great ability and of upright views, but he wished to ally Prussia with France, to take a threatening position towards Austria and Russia, the growing power of which latter State he dreaded, and to give a constitution to Poland. Bischofswerder, on the contrary, was well disposed towards Austria, and wished to enrich himself by the plunder of Poland (for the cupidity of her powerful neighbours was once more contemplating a fresh dismemberment of that hapless country). Consequently Hertzberg was thwarted and insulted into giving in his resignation in 1791, and thus Prussia lost the only sound and vigorous member of the Cabinet. Bischofswerder, although apparently taking no share in the government, was now the virtual King of Prussia—except that his wife governed him ! Next to him in power was his dependent Wöllner, "the little king," as he was called—a vulgar man, who made religion a cloak for his ambition : he regulated the administration of the interior. Luchesi, a man devoid of principle, and Haugwitz, the humble servant of Madame de Rietz, had also considerable influence in their respective positions ; if any of the other ministers ventured to oppose their views, or to offer advice to the King, he complained to Bischofswerder, and was answered, "Good God ! is not your Majesty King ?"

* "Vertraute Briefe."

But even this was not the lowest debasement of the Government at this unhappy period. A crowd of needy sycophants obtained place in the lower offices, and a considerable degree of power besides at Court ; the most important papers lay open to the discretion of the valets, says Mirabeau, and though they dreaded the King's violence, they were the first to laugh at his incapacity. These people, with Rietz at their head, made a market of place and title ; the first year of Frederic William's reign was marked by the creation of twenty-three "new-baked" counts, as the old nobility called them, many of them ennobled "not by the King, but by the Kammerdiener !" *

Meanwhile an era was fast approaching which imperatively called for the closest attention from the sovereign of every State in Europe, and summoned even Frederic William from the attractions of his harem to the hardships of a soldier's life ; and here, though his campaigns were unsuccessful, that Prince shows to the best advantage, for he was a brave soldier at least.

The commencement of the revolution in France caused a speedy conclusion of the alliance, which had been so long in contemplation, between Prussia and Austria, and the Emperor and King Frederic William prepared for an attack upon revolutionary France, in defence of her unfortunate monarch, Louis XVI.

When Frederic the Great died, the Prussian army was famed as the finest and best-disciplined body of troops in Europe. Its rapid success under the Duke of Brunswick in Holland, when in 1787 Frederic William espoused the cause of his brother-in-law, the hereditary Stattholder, had no way shaken its reputation, whilst the general had gained a somewhat undue degree of fame for his almost unopposed conquest. Therefore it was with the most confident expectation and the most boastful expressions that the Prussian army again prepared to take the field under the same leader. France was to be conquered as easily as Holland had been. "Do not purchase too many horses," said

* "Vertraute Briefe."

Bischofswerder to Massenbach, "the comedy will not last long, we shall be at home again in the autumn."

The King himself, accompanied by the two elder Princes and Prince Louis Ferdinand (the son of Prince Ferdinand) left Berlin on the 10th of June, 1792, in order to go to Frankfort, the point of junction with his imperial ally, the new Emperor Francis II., whose coronation took place on the 17th. The consequences of the Duke of Brunswick's unfortunate manifesto, and of his hesitation, whether he would fight for his master, or befriend the republicans, if they bribed high enough; the sufferings of the Prussian army; the inglorious retreat, at the moment when Dumourier, by anticipation, saw himself beaten, and the enemy in possession of the capital,—all the events of that campaign, whose only result was to teach the raw republican levies that they could fight as well as flee, are too well known for it to be necessary to detail them. The journals kept by the crown Prince and by Goethe, who accompanied the Prussian army, furnish many interesting details of this expedition; the latter gives various anecdotes of the emigrant French Princes, to whom Frederic William had afforded a refuge in his dominions, and who now re-entered their country in the midst of a foreign invading army. The effeminate habits of these luxuriously-nurtured Frenchmen were matter partly of amusement, partly of disgust to the Prussian soldiers, who were suffering so many hardships on their behalf. Goethe* relates, that the fact of the King of Prussia wearing no overcoat, notwithstanding

* Goethe's "Campagne in Frankreich." "11th September, on our return to our first quarters, we found a distinguished emigrant, formerly known to us. He complained bitterly of the cruelty which the King of Prussia inflicted on the French Princes. Startled and almost confounded at this, we demanded some further explanation. Then we learnt, that on leaving Glorieux, in spite of the drenching rain, the King put on no great coat, wrapped no cloak about him, and consequently the Royal Princes had also been obliged to deny themselves these weather-proof garments. Our marquis, however, could not bear to behold these illustrious persons, lightly clad, wet through and through, and dripping with rain; indeed, if it would have availed, he would have laid down his life to see them riding in a dry carriage."

the torrents of rain which accompanied the march,—because he wished to encourage the men, by letting them see that their King would not indulge in comforts not provided for them,—was resented as a personal injury by them. This, and other anecdotes of a similar kind, show that they were not men whose valour in behalf of their country, was likely to excite enthusiastic sympathy.

Frederic William felt that campaign as a sad disgrace. His object in commencing the war had been a sincere desire to assist the unfortunate King of France. He had written to the Queen Dowager two days before he left Berlin, “That which alone has induced me to commence this war, is the idea that it must tend to the good of mankind, and check the frightful outbreak of anarchy which has originated in France, and would at length desolate all Europe.”* Instead of achieving the end which he desired, the measures pursued had but precipitated the catastrophe which he sought to avert. Probably had he trusted to his own generalship, instead of that of his cousin, and passed on to Paris, as he and the army wished, the result might have been nearer the accomplishment of the views with which he left home.

Frederic William returned therefore to Berlin, after rather more than a year’s absence; and the marriage of his two sons, who had been betrothed while at Frankfort, to the two sister Princesses of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, followed very shortly afterwards.

The King was once more called into the field before the end of his reign, at the time of the insurrection in Poland, in 1794. That country having attempted to secure some little stability by forming a constitution for itself, the great Powers on either side, roused by these feeble movements to the perception that life was not as yet quite extinct in their victim, resolved to settle the matter by a final partition; this plan was accordingly put into execution in 1792. The Poles,

* “Louisa Königin von Preussen zum Deutschen Volke.”

gathering energy from despair, rushed to arms, and headed by Poland's last hero, Kosciusko, asserted their right to hold their own towns, and to be masters of their own country. Frederic William prepared to assist in subduing them, and marched to join the Russian army and lay siege to Warsaw. But the Polish scythe-armed peasants were fired by a spirit which made them more than a match even for the perfect discipline of the Prussian army, and after a most inglorious campaign, Frederic William broke up the siege and returned to Berlin, leaving Suwarrow to quell Poland alone, and to wring at Maciejowice, that last bitter moan, "*Finis Poloniæ*" from the great heart of Kosciusko.

The behaviour of the Prussian troops in this expedition began to show how well grounded were the apprehensions of Frederic II., when in 1778 he "made peace, because he feared to be defeated and survive his glory;"* it was evident that the far-famed discipline of the infantry and the wonderful manœuvring of the cavalry, which were trained to perform their evolutions in almost as small a space as infantry, were in no way an indemnification for the deterioration, moral and physical, which the army had undergone. Frederic II. had been guilty of a great mistake in officering his regiments solely from the nobility, because he considered the *bürger* class wanting in cultivation and honourable feeling; and so it might have been at the commencement of his reign, but the liberty which he allowed to the press, and the consequent diffusion of knowledge, had now, in great measure, corrected this deficiency, and the *bürger* class would have afforded a large amount of efficiency and talent. Besides, the officers whom he had formed under his own eye were very different men from the young nobility who succeeded to their places, who, considering themselves born, as it were, to promotion in the army, consequently took no pains to fit themselves for their posts, but squandered their property, and made themselves premature old men by their profligate

* "*Vertraute Briefe.*"

manner of life. Thus, while one officer employed in the Polish campaign, "amused himself at the theatre,* another concealed himself in an empty cask at his inn, on the approach of the enemy,† and the rest marched where the enemy was not,"‡ it was not to be wondered at that the soldiers, with such leaders, should have fled before the valiant sons of Poland, all bearing in their hearts the thirst for vengeance on the persecutors of their country.

At Berlin, within the last few years, several disturbances had taken place in Frederic William's polygamic family arrangements. The Countess Ingenheim was remorseful and unhappy in her more than doubtful position; her health gradually failed, and she died of consumption in 1789. But a new and very beautiful claimant was ambitious of succeeding to her place; this was a lady of noble birth and very imperious disposition, the Gräfin Sophia von Dönhoff. She insisted on the same conditions as her predecessor had done, namely, the Queen's consent to a left-handed marriage; and a dowry. Queen Louisa was again insulted by the same extraordinary demand as had been made upon her in the former instance, and again yielded a consent, which would have been a refusal, had she dared. But the new wife soon made it apparent that she expected to rule as actual Queen. Her behaviour was most insolent and audacious; often did the eyes of the unhappy Louisa fill with tears, as she thought of the gentleness of the Countess Ingenheim, in comparison with the insults she was condemned to submit to from this haughty upstart. And not only did the Gräfin consider herself called upon to govern the Court, and oblige all but the Queen to yield precedence to her, but she undertook to govern the State as well. She wrote to the King, to threaten him that she would "give him up altogether, if he entered with such levity upon so important and difficult an undertaking" as that of the invasion of France. "Either you must march at the head of 200,000 Prussians and 250,000 Austrians, or give up every hope of victory," wrote

* Schwerin at Posen. † Manstein at Kosten. ‡ See "Vertraute Briefe."

she. But Frederic William did not approve of being dictated to, and the endless caprices of the fair Countess at length wearied him out; he began to neglect her, and she began to resent it violently. Her last interview with him was of a very stormy nature.

The King had one refined taste, namely, for music; he was passionately fond of it; he had in his youth played extremely well upon the violoncello. One night, at a concert in the new garden at Potsdam, the Gräfin rushed suddenly, with dishevelled hair through the assembly, and laid her infant at his feet, exclaiming, "There, take back your property!" This scene, however, only hastened her downfall. After this period Madame de Rietz, now the Gräfin Lichtenau, still preserved her old sway over the King, and more than her old sway at Court; and, alas! the Queen was still, either totally neglected, or subjected to indignities which would have rendered total neglect preferable. She was obliged to receive the favourite at Court, after her elevation to a title; she even also presented her with her portrait set in brilliants; this was done by the advice of her Oberhofmeister Wittgenstein, and her gentlewoman of the chamber, who had obtained great influence over her mind, and who thus sought to gain favour with the King.

A heavy trial, too, which she had but little anticipated, came upon her at the close of the year 1796; this was the death of her second son, Prince Louis. Her affliction during his illness was terrible to witness, and upon his death she was almost beside herself for a time. Her only consolation lay now in her eldest son. The crown Prince had long witnessed his mother's position with infinite pain; he had seen her day by day subjected, in her own Court, to humiliations the greatest that can be put upon a woman, and seen it without the power of redressing her wrongs, or aiding her in any way except by his silent respect and affection. But when in 1793 he brought home his own pure, young bride, and saw her from time to time exposed to the defilement of intercourse with such a woman, the indig-

nation which he had so long smothered, with difficulty, from a sense of filial respect towards his father, could scarcely be longer kept within bounds.

When the King's health failed in 1796, he gave himself wholly up to the care of Gräfin Lichtenau, who tended him with an affection and fidelity that form a redeeming point in her character. After his partial recovery, in the spring of 1797, she had an opera performed in the new theatre she had caused to be built, in her house, under the Lindens; the piece selected was "*La Morte di Cleopatra*," composed by Nasolini. To this performance she, with the King's sanction, invited not only the rest of the royal family, but the Queen herself. The invitation was, in point of fact, a command; and to this indignity also Louisa was obliged to stoop. Dampmartin relates "that the Queen, the crown Prince and his consort, as well as the other royal Princes and Princesses, trembled with indignation at the humiliating constraint which made them the guests of a woman, whose very neighbourhood they felt to be an insult. The King bore upon his pallid countenance the tokens of mortal disease. The kind-hearted Queen writhed her lips into a sickly smile. The crown Prince could not conceal his violent agitation; he cast stolen glances alternately at his tenderly-loved mother, and his adored wife, as if he could not take in the possibility of beholding them in the apartments of the mistress of his father." The Gräfin Lichtenau meanwhile, far more richly dressed than the Queen, enjoyed the triumph of receiving the King's attentions before her. "At some strophes of the opera," proceeds the description, "in which Octavia laments the infidelity of Mark Antony, all eyes involuntarily turned upon the Queen, and she concealed her face in her handkerchief."

There is nothing in such scenes as these which would lead us to wish to prolong the review of them; I therefore pass over the festival given by the people of Berlin on the recovery of Frederic William, "the much beloved," as they called him, without further notice than to say, that the Queen pleaded in-

disposition to prevent the repetition of suffering similar to that which she had submitted to on the occasion just described; whilst the Gräfin Lichtenau appeared in classic Greek costume, as Polyhymnia, and had the effrontery to sing, at the public banquet, some verses of her own composition, in honour of the King and of the feast.

This was the last public occasion on which the King was present; his constitution was enfeebled by his excesses, and his health soon again gave way; symptoms of the hereditary malady of his family, dropsy, again presented themselves. The autumn of that last year of his life was a season of dreary suffering to him; his later days, too, were tormented by all kinds of abominable empiricism, which deluded him with the vain hopes of recovery by the use of sundry "infallible" remedies. "From all lands streamed learned physicians, empirics, adepts, magnetisers, and wonder-doctors," to Potsdam.* One charlatan proposed that the King should recline upon cushions made of the skins and various other parts of unborn calves. When this disgusting nostrum proved useless, another quack-doctor undertook to produce a certain "pure air of life," which would unquestionably restore him; this pure ether was to be obtained by anything but pure means, since putrid animal substances were necessary to produce it; he had his laboratory in one of the palace kitchens, and so fearful were the odours produced, that it was necessary to dismiss him.† A French magnetiser then propounded a new theory, viz. that the "principle of life" being exhausted in the King's constitution, it should be restored by means of taking "electric baths;" listening to soft music; witnessing the sports of young children, kittens, or puppies; having two children, of from eight to ten years of age, to sleep with him, &c. &c.‡ But even this remedy, though more agreeable than the others, and like them duly tested, failed. The cold grasp of death was upon Frederic William, and it was useless to struggle against it. In

* Vehse.

† Förster.

‡ Ibid.

this illness, as in his last, he was constantly attended by the Gräfin Lichtenau, who took up her abode close at hand (the King was residing in the new marble-palace at Potsdam), whilst the Queen remained in Berlin, and only came, at most, once in the week to visit her husband. I quote the description of an eyewitness of one of the last scenes of the King's life—"The saloon was illuminated by the soft but melancholy light of wax-candles, placed in alabaster vases. In the background sat the King, his swollen feet supported by cushions, in a deep arm-chair of green velvet, pale, emaciated, with labouring breath, his dying eyes wandering hither and thither with an unsteady gaze. Near him on the right sat the Gräfin Lichtenau, stroking his swollen hand. To the left the Marquise de Nadaillac, whose sprightly amiability refreshes him. The Abbé d'Andelard, Prince Meurice of Broglie, Saint Paterne and Saint Ygnon, were also present; the latter was the reader, a jovial buffoon, who would have been better calculated to amuse the dulness of the country folks than to make the sick King forget his sufferings; near the fire played the children of the Countess Dönhoff, the Graf and Gräfin of Brandenburg, whose education the King had entrusted to the Gräfin Lichtenau. Between whiles the sick man sunk into an uneasy slumber, out of which bad dreams again startled him. The reader did not allow himself to be interrupted by this, and it made a startling impression to hear Molière's 'Malade Imaginaire' read beside the suffering and dying King."

It was, indeed, a strange scene, and a strange lecture for the last hours of a dying man. The King's state now grew worse from day to day, but still the same little assemblies of French refugees, by whom he had now been for some time almost entirely surrounded, met at his dinner-table every day, although he could not join them, but sat apart in his easy chair. At one of these occasions, on the 12th November, the loud report of a champagne bottle, amidst the stillness of the company—for the King was too ill to bear to hear them talk—so startled

him that he fainted, and was carried to bed. On the 15th, the Queen and the crown Prince were apprised that he wished to take leave of them. Even this last parting took place in the presence of the Gräfin Lichtenau; and Frederic William's feeble request for forgiveness from her whom he had wronged so much, was transmitted by the lips of the rival who had weaned his affections from her all along, and who now, as she supported him in her arms, alone was near enough to catch the purport of those tremulous accents. The interview was short and painful; the King's weakness overcoming him, he signed to the Gräfin to conduct his wife and son to the ante-chamber. The Queen was greatly overcome; the great suffering and weakness of her husband roused all the tenderness and forgiveness of her nature, and she flung her arms round her rival's neck and wept, sobbing out broken words of gratitude for her kindness to the dying man. But the crown Prince looked on almost with indignation, whilst his mother thus gave way to her feelings; he could not forget even in that woman's devotion to the one parent, the injuries she had inflicted on the other. When the Gräfin went back to the King, he asked her, "What did my son say to you?" "Not a word," replied she. "Not a word of thanks?" said the King, angrily; "then I will see no one else." When the Gräfin by his order informed other members of the royal family that the King declined to see them, it excited against her much, in this case, unmerited indignation, as they imagined her to be excluding them from the King by her own authority.

All the rest of that day and night were passed in a fearful conflict between Frederic William's natural strength of constitution and the fell power of death. Awful were the convulsive struggles of the death agony; the leather of the chair in which he sat was torn to pieces by the spasmodic clutchings of the sufferer. "What have I done to deserve so hard a death?" groaned he; "I have always meant well by my people." At length came the moment of release. At nine o'clock on the

morning of November 16, 1797, Frederic William II. was called to the bar of his Maker to answer for his own deeds.

But he went through the bitterness of death alone, with no tender hand to support his head, no priest to speak a word of comfort ; only unfeeling hirelings * around him. To one of his valets he turned in his agony and desolation, and taking his hand entreated him not to leave him in that last hour. The companion of so many years was not with him at his death, she had left him early in the morning to take a short period of repose. She was roused from her slumber at once by the intelligence of the King's death and of her own arrest. That had been the crown Prince's first thought on being informed of the death of his father. Times had now changed with the hitherto all-powerful Gräfin Lichtenau. All her possessions were confiscated and herself imprisoned, whilst the very men whom she had helped to elevate to power, turned their backs upon her in her adversity. She was put under slight imprisonment at Glogau, but allowed a pension, it having been found that most of the charges brought against her could not be substantiated. Whilst there she commenced a process-at-law against the King for the recovery of her possessions. Liberty was offered her, on condition that she should desist from the suit. She was accordingly liberated in 1800. She married a young actor named Fontano, or rather Holbein, who afterwards became celebrated as a theatrical writer. He forsook her before long. She then went to reside at Paris. The Emperor Napoleon, when Prussia submitted to him, procured her an indemnification for her losses. She died in 1820, aged sixty-eight. Much might be said in favour of the natural disposition of this woman, who played so extraordinary a part in Prussia. She was generous and kind-hearted, and most sincerely attached to the King ; neither did she make use of her influence over

* Beaumanoir says that one of his attendants had the brutality to exclaim as the struggle still continued, "*Cela ne finira-t-il pas,—il ne veut pas crever ?*"—*See Vehse.*

him to provide riches for herself after his death. The accusation which Frederic William III. brought against her for removing papers and jewels from the palace during the King's illness was proved to be unfounded; and since Frederic William would infallibly have been always governed by female management of some kind, he and the kingdom were in less danger in her hands than they would have been in those of almost any other person in her position. She possessed a very uncommon power of attraction even to an advanced age. Her journey to Italy in 1793 (which drew upon the treasury largely) was a series of triumphs. She was received at nearly all the foreign Courts she visited in the course of it. Several British subjects of high rank * paid their addresses to her, but she remained always faithful to her first love; even the allurements of wealth could not shake her fidelity. When Schmidt the "fat Cupid" of Berlin offered her his hand and his fortune, she only feigned to listen to his vows in order to induce him to go down on his knees, a posture from which he found it impossible to rise, on the King's preconcerted entrance, until his Majesty called for a servant to help him!

The influence which such a reign as that of Frederic William must necessarily have exercised upon the already corrupt state of society in Berlin, may be easily imagined. The most revolting pictures are given of the vice which then prevailed. Town and country were said to be alike depraved; all ranks and classes rivalled each other in iniquity. The facility of divorce had caused the utmost laxity with regard to the marriage tie. Matrimony had become, in point of fact, a merely nominal affair. A married couple, who were attached to each other, were looked upon as an anomaly, and held up to ridicule. The female sex had sunk to the lowest state of degradation. In short, Prussia, before she could be cleansed from her filthiness,

* Amongst these were Lord Templetown, an Irishman, but the King would not give his consent to the marriage, and the fiery lover soon quarrelled with his lady. Lord Bristol, Bishop of Londonderry, was also her devoted admirer: she had various offers from other distinguished foreigners.

required to be passed "seven times" through the fire; and this refining process was now shortly to be accomplished.

But though Frederic William did not forward the cause of morality, nor promote the growth of literature and science in his dominions, he lent his aid at least in one respect to assert the rights of humanity, by mitigating the severity of military discipline in the army. During the reigns of his grandfather and uncle, the life of the common soldier had been one of great hardship. The slightest dereliction from duty, the smallest inadvertence upon parade, were punished with the most barbarous severity. Their pay was so small* that when provisions were dear, they were completely upon famine rations. We read of one poor fellow who died from having eaten ravenously of raw potatoes, upon a field of which he chanced to come in his hunger. Many of the officers were brutally severe in the use of their canes when the men drilled badly. One, named Ramin, noted for his harshness, put out one of a soldier's eyes in this way. The next time he saw him, he said, "I broke a pane of glass for you the other day, there is the price of it," giving him a twenty-groschen piece. It may be imagined with what dread the recruiting officers were received when they entered a village, the young men, with few exceptions, being all liable to be enlisted for the service. Many maimed themselves, by cutting off one or more fingers of one hand, in order thus to escape the requisition. Those who were already in the army were, in many cases, so wretched from ill treatment and insufficient food, that finding it almost impossible to desert, and being told that they would go to hell if they committed suicide, it was no uncommon expedient for them to murder an infant, with the view of being condemned to be shot. So frequent had this crime become, that Frederic II. found it necessary, in order to put a stop to it, to deny such persons as committed it the solace of a priest in their last moments. The condition

* The pay of the common soldier was eight Gros every fifth day, or $1\frac{1}{2}d.$ per day.—"Licht-Strahlen."

of the soldiers was much ameliorated in Frederic William II.'s reign. The horrible punishment of "Gassen-laufen," or running the gauntlet, was now also put a stop to in the army.

After her husband's death the Queen Dowager's trials may be said to have been at an end. We find almost no mention of her actions during the few remaining years of her life. Her son's respectful affection for her was now able to gratify itself by placing her in that high position of honour and respect from which it had cost him so much pain to behold her debarred. She had also the happiness of witnessing his perfect domestic felicity, and of seeing her grandchildren growing up fair and engaging around her. The little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, the herald of approaching tempest, was only just rising above the horizon, and many fair days of social regeneration and national progress, beneath the mild administration of her son, seemed still in prospect for the country, when Queen Frederica Louisa breathed her last, in that first year of Prussia's troubles, 1805.

Besides King Frederic William III. and Prince Louis, her other two sons were Prince Henry and Prince William; the former lived and died in Rome, where he had married below the rank of a royal prince. Prince William married the Princess Marianne of Hesse-Homberg; he offered to become a hostage for the payment of the contributions levied upon Prussia by Napoleon, but the Emperor replied "that it was very noble, but impossible." His son Prince Adalbert, married, with the left hand, Theresa, the sister of Fanny Elsler; and Prince Walde-mar was the lover of a daughter of Goethe's Bettina von Arnim. Wilhemina, one of the Queen's daughters, married William, Stattholder of the Netherlands, and Augusta was united to the Elector of Hesse, William II.*

* Vehse.

LIFE OF LOUISA,

OF MECKLENBURG-STRELITZ,

SIXTH QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.

It is a relief to turn from the scenes of profligacy and folly which disgraced the reign of the last King of Prussia, to the contemplation of a character so pure and elevated as that of the Princess whose name heads this chapter. Let Jean Paul tell the story of the birth of this noblest and fairest lady of his German Father-land, from that chronicle of her life which he had shrined amidst his holiest recollections, in the mystical depths of his poet's heart. "Before she was born, her genius stood before Destiny, and said, 'I have many wreaths for the child, the flower wreath of beauty, the myrtle wreath of marriage, the crown of a kingdom, the laurel and oak wreath of German Father-land's love—also a crown of thorns; which of all may I give the child?' 'Give her all thy wreaths and crowns,' said Destiny. 'But there is yet one crown in reserve, which is worth all the others.' On the day when the death-crown was placed on that noble head, appeared the genius again, but only his tears questioned Destiny. Then answered a voice, 'Look up!' and the God of Christians appeared." *

The Princess Louisa,† of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, thus called

* *Schmerzlich-tröstende Erinnerungen des 19en Juli, 1810,*" contained in Jean Paul's "*Herbst Blumine,*" chap. 10, and especially addressed by the author in his dedication to the Prince George Charles Frederic, hereditary Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the brother of Queen Louisa.

† Louisa Augusta Wilhelmina Amelia were her baptismal names.

by Destiny to so mingled an inheritance of joy and sorrow, was descended from one of the most ancient princely houses of Germany; she numbered amongst her ancestors Henry the Lion, Duke of Saxony, by whom the country was conquered from its barbarous inhabitants, and who gave the hand of his daughter, and part of the conquered territory, to the heir of the former sovereign; who thus became the founder of the Mecklenburg family. The father of Louisa was Charles Louis Frederic, then hereditary prince, afterwards Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, the brother of Queen Charlotte of England. He was Governor General of Hanover, and held the baton of Field Marshal in that service at the time of the birth of this daughter. Her mother, a Princess of Hesse Darmstadt, and cousin of the crown Princess of Prussia (Louisa, wife of Frederic William II., the memoir of whose life we have just concluded), died after giving birth to her tenth child, May 22, 1782. The widower withdrew, in the first depth of his sorrow, to the comparative seclusion of Herrenhausen, committing the Princess Louisa, then six years of age, to the charge of Fräulein Wollzogen. Anxious to replace, as far as possible, the tenderness of a mother's affection to his children, he married the sister of his former consort, in 1784; but the renewal of his domestic happiness was destined to be of very short duration, for this lady unhappily followed her sister to the grave, in 1785, after giving birth to a son. The Duke was well-nigh heart-broken at this second bereavement; he retired from the Hanoverian service, and betook himself to Darmstadt, where he placed his twice-orphaned children under the charge of their grandmother, the Dowager Landgravine, a lady of most exemplary character, and one who was, moreover, gifted with that nice perception of the shades of disposition in children, which is so desirable a qualification in those who have the charge of their education, since it affords the best chance for the adoption of such a system of management as may beneficially develope the germs of character. She soon observed that the course which had hitherto been pursued with

the young Louisa—a child of an imaginative and warmly-affectionate temperament—was rather calculated, by checking all manifestation of natural feeling, to render the timid child shy and reserved, than to ripen such a disposition to the rich maturity of which it gave promise. She therefore replaced the present instructress, *Fräulein Agier*, by a Swiss lady, named *Gélieur*, a person admirably qualified, by her amiability, uprightness, and piety, rightly to influence the susceptible mind thus committed to her charge. How scrupulously and well she discharged her duties, is shown, at once, by the effect of her training on her pupil's mind, and by the loving respect with which the Princess ever regarded her in after life. The King also, always said that he owed her a great debt of gratitude for her care of his Louisa in her youth; and long after her death, when a gleam of brighter promise once more shone on Prussia's fallen fortunes, he turned aside from his route in passing through *Neufchatel* (now again become Prussian ground) to visit *Fräulein Gélieur* in her brother's quiet parsonage, and selecting a shawl often worn by the Queen, from the relics of his beloved which had accompanied him to the battle-field, he presented it to her, because he knew his wife would have wished the friend whom she so much venerated, to possess some last remembrance of her.

Amongst the earliest notices of the life of the Princess Louisa is one of a journey in which she accompanied her grandmother on a visit to her aunt, the *Pfalzgräfin* of *Zweibrücken*, at *Strasburg*; whilst there she visited the Cathedral, and very much wished to ascend the whole 725 steps, to the ball, for the sake of the view. From *Strasburg* their journey lay through the beautiful district of the Rhine to the Netherlands. The history of this country excited much interest in the mind of Princess Louisa, who had read with deep sympathy the account of its brave struggles for freedom in Schiller's "*Revolt of the Netherlands*." In 1792 the two Princesses, Louisa and *Frederica*, accompanied their grandmother to *Frankfort*, to be present

at the coronation of the Emperor Francis II. During their sojourn at this town they paid that visit to Goethe's mother described by "Bettina" in Goethe's "Correspondence with a Child," when the two Princesses amused themselves by pumping water in the "Frau Rath's" Hof, and could not be prevailed upon to desist from this undignified amusement until their Hofmeisterin obliged them to come in, and, lest they should be tempted to resume it, fastened them into the room, to the great regret of the Frau Rath, who thought it very hard that the poor young things should be deprived of so innocent a pleasure, which they could enjoy only at her house, and who strove to console them by setting before them a plentiful supply of her famous "Eier-kuchen" and "Speck salat," of which they left not so much as a "crumb or a leaf," such justice did they do to her skill. Shortly after this time, the Rhine-country threatening to become the seat of war, the two Princesses were sent on a visit to their married sister, Charlotte, the Duchess of Hildesburghausen. The picturesque scenery of the romantic river Werra, which runs through this district, had a peculiar charm for the Princess Louisa's highly imaginative temperament, and her *séjour* in the neighbourhood seems to have been a season of much enjoyment to her. She and her sister remained there until 1793, when they returned to Darmstadt *viâ* Frankfort. During the time which had intervened between this and their former visit, Frankfort had twice changed hands, having been taken by the French, and recaptured by the brave General Rüchel. It was now the head-quarters of the Prussian army, and the Landgrave of Hesse, who was in alliance with Frederic William II., had invited his relative, the Dowager Landgravine, to return by that route, in order to have an opportunity of presenting her two grand-daughters to the King of Prussia. Thus strangely does this eventful visit to Frankfort, which was to influence so deeply the future fate of both sisters, appear to have been the effect of chance. Who would have predicted that the two slenderly-apanaged Princesses of Meck-

lenburg-Strelitz who accidentally passed through Frankfort, intending to remain there but a few hours, would have left that place as the affianced brides of the two elder Princes of Prussia ! Yet such was the fact. The Landgravine of Hesse had intended to resume her journey after visiting the theatre on the evening of her arrival, but she was induced to defer her intended departure by an invitation to sup with the King.

The Princess Louisa was now seventeen years of age, and in the first bloom of that exquisite beauty which afterwards became celebrated throughout Europe. She was tall and slender in person, and there was a peculiar grace about her movements, a nameless charm which hovered round her, and could not be traced to mere beauty of feature or form, but which seemed an emanation from the bright spirit within, in short, it was "the mind, the music breathing from her face,"* which possessed a perfect power of fascination over all who saw her. Both old and young, rough and severe, as well as refined and gentle, were equally attracted. "Even such men as were not easily carried away by enthusiasm, spoke with enchantment of Louisa," says Vehse. "The rough and caustic Ritter von Lang became tenderly sentimental in the passage of his memoirs, where he speaks of her. 'She floated before me,' says he, 'like a wholly unearthly being of angelic form and honey-sweet eloquence, by means of which she concentrated all the beams of her graciousness, so that every one seemed to fall into a magic dream.' 'She was a complete enchantress if ever I saw one.'"[†] This was the fairy creature upon whom the eyes of the crown Prince rested, on his first introduction to the Princess Louisa, of Mecklenburg-Strelitz. Years afterwards, when he had lost her, he said to Eylert, in one of those rare moments in which he trusted himself to speak of her, "I felt

* Frau von Berg, in describing her mistress, says, "an inexpressible grace clothed her every motion ; but this grace was not merely outward, it arose from the inner depths of her mind, and therefore was it so full of soul (*Seelenvoll*)."

† Von Lang saw her after she was Queen, in 1803, at Anspach.

when I first saw her, 'Tis she, or none on earth.' I remember having met with a passage somewhere in Schiller which contains those words, and describes the emotions that awoke in my heart at that moment." Eylert afterwards looked out the passage; it is from the "Brant von Messina," and runs thus:—

"Whence she came, and how before me thus
 She stood—that ask not—as I turned
 My eyes, they fell on her who stood beside,—
 And strange, mysteriously mighty, wonderful
 Her presence seized upon my inner life.—
 'Twas not the magic of that wondrous smile,
 'Twas not the charm which hovered o'er her cheek,
 Nor yet the radiance of her nymph-like form,—
 It was the sweet, deep secret of her being
 Which held and fetter'd me with holy might.
 Like magic powers that mix mysteriously,
 Our twin souls seemed, without one spoken word,
 To leap together, spirit-stirred, and blend;
 As my breath mixed with hers—
 Stranger to me, yet inwardly akin,
 Belov'd at once, I felt grav'd on my heart
 'Tis she or none on earth.—
 It is the holy beam of divine love
 Which strikes upon, and kindles in the soul,
 When kindred spirit meeteth with its kin.
 There is no opposition and no choice,—
 And man may loose not that which Heaven binds."*

Prince Louis, the brother of the crown Prince, was similarly struck with the younger Princess Frederica; and before many days were over, the brothers had each sought the approbation of their father, and the favour of the fair ladies of their respective choice. It is a rare circumstance in the annals of a princely family, that three of the daughters should make pure love-matches, yet so it was with three out of the four sisters of the family Mecklenburg-Strelitz, for the Princess Theresa, of Thurn and Taxis, had been similarly wooed and won by a man,

* Eylert, in his "Charakterzüge aus dem Leben Friedrich Wilhelms III.," gives, on this text, a long disquisition upon the subject of love at first sight; but what in German is only sentiment, sometimes, when translated into English, sounds very like sentimentality. The passage may be found in Mrs. Richardson's "History of Queen Louisa."

who, for the love of her, rejected the chance of half a million, with the hand of the Princess of Doria.*

Jean Paul dedicated his "Titan" to these "four fair and noble sisters on the throne,"† and in his "Herbst-Blumine," he thus speaks of them in his own richly-quaint, poetic fashion :—‡
 "Aphrodite, Aglaia, Euphrosyne, and Thalia, looked down into the earthly clear-obscure here below, and weary of the ever bright but cold Olympus, they wished themselves below the clouds enveloping our earth, where the soul ever loves more because it suffers more, and where it is sadder but warmer. They heard the holy tones mount up, with which Polyhymnia, invisible, wanders through the deep earth-valleys in order to refresh and quicken us, and they sorrowed that their thrones stood so far distant from the sighs of the helpless. Then they resolved to take the earthly veil and clothe themselves in our form. But when they stirred the first blossoms of earth, and cast only beams but no shadows, then Fate, the mournful Queen of Gods and Men, raised her eternal sceptre and said—
 'Immortals become mortal upon earth, and every spirit becomes a human being.' Then they became human, and were called Louisa, Charlotte, Theresa, and Frederica."

The King of Prussia was by no means bent upon aggrandisement, by means of matrimonial alliances with foreign Powers, for his sons; he therefore cordially gave his consent to their wishes, and himself exchanged the rings on the betro-

* See "Luise Königin von Preussen zum Deutschen Volke." The attachment of the Princess Theresa and her husband remained as ardent and unchanged in their old age as in their youth; on the day when the Prince was attacked while hunting with the seizure which caused his death, his wife, ignorant of the cause of the delay, was watching, as usual, for his return from the windows of the castle, and waving her handkerchief to let him know she was at her post.

† Louisa Queen of Prussia, Frederica Queen of Holland, Theresa Princess of Thurn and Taxis, and Charlotte Duchess of Hildeburghausen.

‡ This passage is quoted by the author of "Luise Königin von Preussen zum Deutschen Volke." This work is one of the most pleasing of the many memoirs of this favourite Queen of the Prussians: it is written with much taste, and contains also great part of the work of Frau von Berg, the confidential friend of Louisa, during the period of trial which preceded her death.

thal of the two young couples at Darmstadt, in April, 1793. In the ensuing May, the two Princesses visited the Prussian camp before Mainz. Goethe—who, as stated above, accompanied the army on this campaign—saw them on this occasion. He writes, Thursday, May 29, from the camp before Mainz:—"A pleasant spectacle was prepared for us all, especially for me. The Princesses of Mecklenburg had dined with the King at Bodenheim,* and after dinner they visited the camp. I concealed myself in my tent, so that I could see their Highnesses, who passed up and down immediately in front of it, and observe them narrowly; and truly, amidst the tumult of war, one might have taken these two young ladies for heavenly visions, whose impression upon me will never be effaced."† That knight of olden chivalry, La Motte Fouqué, also, thought it truly "in the spirit of the old hero times, that the eyes of beauty and innocence should be directed to the glorious battlefield."

After some months more had been wasted in this campaign, the crown Prince gave up the command of the siege of Landau to General Konobelsdorf, and returned with his brother to Berlin, in November, in order to prepare for the reception of their brides. The two Princesses were expected in December; they were received on their arrival by their affianced husbands, at Potsdam, and on Sunday the 23rd, a bright, clear winter's morning, they made their state entrance into Berlin. The streets were lined with spectators, all dressed in their holiday suits, for the marriage was highly popular, glowing reports of the wonderful beauty and goodness of the future crown Princess having been spread by all who had seen her.

The spot fixed upon for the erection of a gate of honour, was one which commanded the finest view in Berlin: it was at the entrance of the Lindens, where the statue of Frederic the Great now stands, and where on one side, the eye seeks the Branden-

* The King's head-quarters.

† See "Campagne in Frankreich."

burg gate through the long vista of a double row of palaces ; and on the other, the view includes the buildings of the university, the library, the royal palace and arsenal, and so away to the old castle and the Dom-Kirche ;* and here the brightest flowers in gay profusion, and orange and citron trees in fruit and blossom, seemed to make even the stern sway of winter yield to the sunny influences of those two fair young brides. This was the central point towards which, as the *cortège* advanced, surrounded and preceded by the citizens, who, despite all remonstrances, persisted in escorting their own crown Princess into their own town,—the thronging multitudes streamed, gay and good-humoured, as only a Berlin crowd can be. When the Princess Louisa approached, fifty pretty little maidens, all dressed in white, and garlanded with bright blossoms, stepped forward to offer her flowers, whilst the leader of the band presented her with a poem of welcome. The affectionate greeting which hailed her on all sides touched Louisa deeply, and in the warmth of her heart, as her readiest means of response, she clasped the child in her arms and kissed her repeatedly. Imagine the dismay of the new Oberhofmeisterin Frau von Voss,† a good and upright lady, whose whole mind was given to her office, and to whom a breach of etiquette was nearly as bad as that of one of the Ten Commandments !

“Mein Gott ! what has your Highness done ?”

“What !” said Louisa, simply ; “may I not do that again ?”‡

The wedding took place on Christmas Eve : the whole party first repaired to the apartments of the venerable Queen Dowager, Elizabeth Christina, whose gentle presence was required to add its mild sunshine to the pleasure of the happy party, and who accompanied them to the White Hall, where the ceremony was performed.

* See Bishop Eylert's “Charakterzüge aus dem Leben Friedrich Wilhelms III.”

† Frau von Voss was the widow of Ernst Johan von Voss, the Queen Dowager's former Grand Marshal, who has been mentioned above.

‡ Eylert.

The citizens of Berlin wished to illuminate in honour of the crown Prince's marriage. "Nay," said he, when he heard of their intention, "if they wish to celebrate my marriage in a way that will give me pleasure, let them bestow upon the poor of Berlin the money which the illumination would have cost." This incident furnished a true omen of the government to be expected by his people, from the hands of Frederic William III., not brilliant, but mild and beneficent.

The marriage of the other young couple, the Princess Frederica and Prince Louis, took place the day following Christmas-day. On the public reception after the crown Prince's marriage, every one had appeared in the uniform belonging to his office, whether civil or military, in order to do honour to the occasion, and the King had expressed his dissatisfaction at seeing so few private citizens amongst the crowd. The consequence was, that at the next reception, the number of tickets was greatly exceeded, and the rooms were so densely crowded that it was very difficult for any one to make his way through them: therefore, when the King, who was now extremely corpulent,* entered, he found it impossible to advance; turning sideways, therefore, with his left elbow in advance, and thus making room for the Queen, who leaned on his right arm, to follow; "Don't disturb yourselves, children," said he; "the Bride-father must not be broader than the other guests to-day;" a speech that passed from lip to lip, and was repeated in affectionate remembrance of the kind-hearted King, for many a day afterwards.

Probably never was any marriage more thoroughly "made in heaven" than this, between the "angel-fair and angel-good" Louisa and the mild and noble-hearted Prince of Prussia. We have but to refer to the pages of Bishop Eylert for proof upon proof of the entire compatibility of the two natures thus united. He delights, in his glowing descriptions of his idolized

* The ladies in Frankfort, where he was very popular during his stay, used to call him "Unser lieber dicke Wilhelm" (our dear fat William).

sovereigns, in giving enumerations of antithetically arranged qualities, the comparative dissimilarity of which, as in all true counterparts, by the closeness of the fittings, make the junction so much the firmer. Thus, for instance, he says:—"He was grave, she was lively; he was concise, she loved to dilate; he was anxious, she cheerful; he was thoughtful, she was sympathising," &c. At the conclusion of the list of corresponding characteristics, he says:—"He was wholly man, she wholly woman, full of love and gentleness; both were one heart, one soul." Louisa was, indeed, that "perfect music unto noble words," whereby our own poet has so beautifully imaged the harmony of the union of true wedlock. Both she and her husband were simple and domestic in their tastes, disliking equally and avoiding, as far as possible, the irksome restraint of court ceremony. Soon, wondering reports circulated, that the "Sie" of polite life was discarded in the intercourse of the crown Prince and Princess; it was dreadfully undignified. Representations were made to the King that they called each other "Du," like the very peasants. The King thought it was right, at least, to mention the subject to the crown Prince. "I have heard," said he, "that you call the crown Princess 'Du?'" "There is a good reason for it," replied the Prince, "with 'Du' one knows where one is, with 'Sie' one always has to consider whether it should be written with a large or a small letter!"

It was a strange sight, too, such as Berlin had never been used to, to behold that youthful couple wandering, unrestrained by the presence of their suite, hand-in-hand, amidst the gardens of their dwelling; or to see the crown Prince driving the Princess alone in an open carriage, like any private citizen with his wife. The court days were no small trial to both parties, the Prince used to look upon his wife when she had laid aside her jewels, on these occasions, as "a pearl restored to its native purity." Once taking hold of both her hands, and looking deep into her blue eyes, he said, "Thank God! you are my wife once more." "How? am I not always your wife then?"

asked she. "Alas! no," replied her husband, "you must so often be only the crown Princess." *

Under these circumstances, it may be imagined that poor Frau von Voss had much to contend with. She could not argue either Prince or Princess into what she considered a decent sense of their position. Besides, there lurked a great deal of quiet humour under the grave smile and calm grey eye of Frederic William, and he delighted in teasing the poor Oberhofmeisterin. Once he desired her to announce to his wife in due form, that his Royal Highness the Crown Prince, desired to have the honour of paying his respects to her Royal Highness, the crown Princess. A proud and happy woman was Frau von Voss, as with slow step and dignified demeanour she approached the Princess's apartment, threw open the door, and— beheld the Prince quietly seated on the sofa beside his wife; he had slipped quickly round by another entrance, in order to be there before her. "You see, my dear Voss," said he to the astonished and crest-fallen mistress of the ceremonies, "My wife and I see each other unannounced as often as we please, which is as it should be in right Christian order; but you are a charming Oberhofmeisterin, and shall be called Dame d'etiquette." † On another occasion, he allowed Frau von Voss to order the state equipage, with outriders, for himself and the Princess to pay a visit of ceremony. When the carriage drove up, he handed the good lady in, shut the door quickly, and ordered the coachman to drive off, whilst he drove the Princess as usual in their plain phaeton.‡ But the crowning indignity was a trick which he played her at Paretz, the happy little rural retreat which he purchased at a later period, and which both he and the crown Princess were very partial to. He invited the Oberhofmeisterin to accompany them in a pleasure excursion through the woods; she was highly flattered at the invitation, and accepted it graciously. At the appointed hour, instead of the elegant carriage in which she had expected a seat, what

* Eylert.

† Ibid.

‡ Ibid.

should drive up to the door but a common *Leiter-Wagen*,* with not even a page to assist the ladies to climb into the clumsy vehicle. It was too much—Frau von Voss could not submit to that last indignity. The crown Prince and Princess mounted nimbly to their places, and called to her to join them, but she shook her head and turned mournfully away—unwilling to behold their disgraceful departure in that ignominious conveyance.

These anecdotes are sufficient to show how happily the stream of Louisa's wedded life glided on amidst the flowers which marked its early course. Both she and her husband forsook the Court as much as possible. The crown Prince's chief motive for living in so retired a manner was, that the idea of exposing his wife to the contamination of contact with the Gräfin Lichtenau was intolerable to him, and it was impossible to frequent the Court without doing so. In addition to this, he was naturally of a retiring disposition, and the education which he had received had fostered this tendency to a painful degree. Allusion has been before made to the restraint under which the Prince had been kept by Benisch in his childhood.† Besides this drawback, moreover, the crown Prince's youth was beset by others of various descriptions. The petty economy of his uncle during his latter years, had provided so sparingly for the maintenance of the young Princes, that their very table was insufficiently supplied, and they frequently rose from it still hungry.‡ On their father's accession things were not much improved, for his pleasures and debts required too great an expenditure to permit a material increase of the allowance of his sons. Thus cramped and confined, both in mind and body, in all imaginable ways,

* The leiter or ladder-waggon, in general use among the German husbandmen, is the most primitive vehicle imaginable, its sides consisting of two broad ladders, which converge at bottom, so as to form a capital V when looked at from either end.

† See Life of Louisa of Hesse Darmstadt.

‡ "Vertraute Briefe."

those natural abilities which had led Mirabeau to augur a "great future for this young man," * stinted in their development by want of proper nutrition and cultivation, his inclinations thwarted whenever they ventured to show themselves, Frederic William became shy, taciturn, and needlessly distrustful of his own judgment. It was happy for him and for Prussia that he was endowed by nature with what Von Cölln calls "so glorious a disposition," that this miserable training developed in him no worse moral features than these, although, politically, the King's absence of self-confidence had the worst possible consequences. "The mild, well-disposed, upright Frederic William III. was not fitted for the king of so corrupt a nation. A despot, without parallel, should have followed Frederic William II.," says the same often-quoted writer. His later instructor, Leuchsenring, with whom he would have had a better chance of improvement, for Leuchsenring was a learned and enlightened man, unfortunately did not long continue in his office, and when he was placed under Brühl's care, in 1786, the mischief was already irreparable. "He already was," says Von Cölln, "and remained, reserved, without self-confidence, and therefore embarrassed and bashful in public; for this reason all representation (*Repräsentiren*) was distasteful—all the ceremonial of his appointed part repugnant to him; he preferred being either by himself or amongst his acquaintances."

The crown Princess, on her side, although calculated to shine in society, and not naturally averse to it, fell contentedly into her husband's tastes in this, as in all other matters, and, perfectly happy in his society, never dreamed of wishing for any other, except that of her sister Frederica. This Princess and her husband, an equally attached couple, frequently visited the crown Prince and Princess, for the marriage of the two brothers seemed to have drawn even closer the bonds of mutual affection which had united them ever since their childhood. Eylert says

* Mirabeau, "Hist. Secrète de la Cour de Berlin."

there could not be a more beautiful sight than to behold those four young people together, so entire was the feeling of confidence, esteem and affection which united them. Both his daughters-in-law were great favourites with the King, the crown Princess especially. He used to call her the "Princess of Princesses," and delighted in procuring her pleasure and giving her proofs of his favour. She enjoyed also, in a high degree, the friendship and esteem of her mother-in-law, the Queen, whilst the aged Queen Dowager gladly admitted the affectionate, winning young creature, between whom and herself there were so many points of sympathy of faith and feeling, to a large share of her warm heart. Thus gaining "golden opinions" from all, happy in her husband, happy in herself, the young crown Princess found herself in an Elysium such as falls to the lot of few who are "born to trouble" in this dark sphere of sin and sorrow, and which was far too calm and peaceful to be long untroubled by storms.

On her first birthday after her marriage, Louisa was fêted by all; the "Court and the people emulated each other in giving her proofs of their attachment."* The King gave her Oranienburg, the once favourite residence of her namesake, the Electress Louisa; a deputation of gentlemen and ladies waited upon her to present her, from His Majesty, with the key. Always longing to make others share in her happiness and thankfulness, by giving them also cause for those emotions, the Princess exclaimed in her delight, "Now I only want a handful of gold for the poor of Berlin." "And how big would the birthday-child like the handful to be?" said her father-in-law, smiling; "As big as the heart of the kindest of kings," replied she, quickly. The King gave her a bountiful "handful," and the poor of Berlin did share her pleasure in the way that pleased her best, and that brought down many a blessing on her young head, from the lips of age and misery.

The war in Poland was the first break in the quiet life of

* "Luise Königin von Preussen."

domestic enjoyment led by Louisa and her husband; the crown Prince and his brother set off for the scene of action in May, 1794. The period of their absence was a painful one to the two sisters, they spent much of their time together. Louisa wrote, after hearing of the danger to which the Prince had been exposed at the storm of Wola, "I tremble at every danger to which my husband exposes himself, but I see that the crown Prince who follows the King upon the throne, must follow him also in the field." Both the Princes behaved with great bravery in this expedition, which, however, like the campaign of two years before, proved, from various causes, a total failure.

The anxiety suffered by the crown Princess during the Polish campaign, and a fall which she had accidentally sustained, resulted in the loss of her first child, a daughter, soon after her husband's return; but the following year, 15th October, 1795, there was great rejoicing in Berlin over the birth of her son Frederic William, the present King of Prussia. The good Queen Dowager, Elizabeth Christina, though now in her eighty-first year, was still able to be present at the christening, and bestow her blessing upon the new-born heir of the kingdom. After this, more than a year of quiet, but almost perfect happiness, was passed by the crown Prince and Princess. They had found the palace at Oranienburg too stately, and requiring too large a retinue for their simple tastes, and the crown Prince therefore purchased the little estate of Paretz, near Potsdam, upon which he began to build a comparatively small residence. He told Gilly, the director of the works, to remember, whilst carrying out the plans, that he was building for a poor gentleman, and not for a crown Prince. This little spot was the scene of the happiest part of Frederic William and Louisa's lives; here, even after the crown Prince's accession, they used to spend all the time which could be spared from the strict performance of the calls of government. The King used to call himself the "Schulze* of Paretz;" and the

* Country Magistrate.

Queen, when asked by a foreign Princess whether she did not find it dull to remain for weeks and weeks in this "hermitage," replied, "Oh! no; I find it uncommonly pleasant to be 'Lady Bountiful' of Paretz." Towards the end of the year 1796, a most unforeseen calamity troubled the peace of all the members of the royal family. This was the illness and death of Prince Louis, the favourite brother of the crown Prince. Both he and his wife were unremitting in their attendance beside the sick bed of the sufferer, and upon them also, in the midst of their own grief, devolved the duty of supporting the King and Queen, and the young wife of Prince Louis, under this affliction. After his death, Louisa had her sister removed to apartments close to her own, so that she might constantly watch over her, until she should have in some measure recovered from the effects of her bereavement, left as she was a widow at the age of eighteen.

The loss of this brother, his bosom friend ever since the days of their mutual childhood, was not likely to pass lightly over the deep, silent feeling of such a heart as that of the crown Prince; his grief had a severe effect upon his health, and he took to his bed immediately after leaving the side of his dead brother, and was for some time seriously ill himself. The death of Prince Louis was the first of the three bereavements sustained by the royal family within a year, and was probably an accelerating cause of the other two. The next loss was that of the Queen Dowager, Elizabeth Christina, which took place about a fortnight after the decease of her great nephew, January 13, 1797. In the autumn of the same year her death was followed by that of King Frederic William II., and the crown Prince ascended the throne under the title of Frederic William III. He had been asked how he would be called upon his accession; "Frederic William," replied he; "*Frederic* is unattainable for me;" for so great was his admiration of the character and abilities of his uncle, that he shrunk from seeming, even by a name, to imply that he was worthy to succeed to the throne of so great

a man. At first there was an effort on the part of the officials of the Court, to subject the new King to the customary routine of court etiquette, but he rebelled so vigorously that the attempt was at length given up ; thus, when *both* the folding-doors were thrown open to admit His Majesty, whereas *one* had sufficed for him as crown Prince—"Am I grown so stout since yesterday that you find that necessary?" said he; and, on observing the Grand Marshal standing behind his chair at table, he asked why he did so. "Etiquette demands it, your Majesty." "How long must you stand there then?" "Till your Majesty first drinks." "Does etiquette prescribe a particular draught?" "Not that I know of, Sire." "Give me that water-bottle, then." In this manner all restraints of the kind were removed as far as possible. People were astonished at the familiar terms "My wife," "My husband," which the King and Queen used in speaking of each other; the public was rather offended at seeing them still driving or walking out unattended, with as little ceremony as before. A passenger through the streets might very possibly chance to meet the King alone and on foot, like any private gentleman. At the Christmas "Markt" or fair that year, the King and Queen were to be seen arm in arm, as usual, going amongst the stalls, purchasing here and there, and insisting on waiting quietly until prior customers were served. The author of the "Vertraute Briefe" seems to think, that the King thus too much lessened the distance between himself and his subjects, and that by dissipating the halo which generally envelopes majesty, he ran some risk of not being duly respected. But, after the Prussians had recovered from the shock of finding that their King would feel, and think, and act very much like any other mere, good man, and could be a king without the constant attendance of a retinue, they began to pay him a great deal more actual respect than they had accorded to any of his predecessors, because they could see with their own eyes that he was not only a man, but an upright, noble-hearted man; they found, too, that he was, in point of fact, endea-

vouring himself to ascertain their wants and wishes by thus mixing with them, and that he was also placing the greatest and most flattering confidence in them, especially by trusting his beautiful young wife, whom they could see that he treasured like the apple of an eye, amongst them, and so at length they became very proud of his confidence and very anxious to deserve it; they began also to think of the perfect love between him and that fair young creature—they called her angel oftener than woman—by his side, as of something very holy and very beautiful, and to wish that affection a little like it might bless their own unions; and thus, example was doing a great work, and it was not such very bad policy for the King to let people see he was a man, after all.

But there was a set of persons who looked with very different eyes upon the young King and Queen, and unfortunately the set was a numerous one in Berlin at that time, and had many members even amongst the highest nobility; these were the people who had lived unclean lives so long, that they had altogether ceased to believe in the existence of anything pure, or holy, or beautiful. Having degraded love, trampled on marriage, and scoffed at religion themselves, they were unable to believe that the King was really a faithful lover and husband, or the Queen in truth a pure and pious wife, and they watched and whispered and coined, hoping by means of any little, venomous lie to throw discredit upon that, which, if true, must place them by contrast, in what a horrible abyss of filth and despair! But it was of no use watching and whispering; where all was bright and clear as the noon-day, what was there to find out through any key-hole of malice? It was in vain to coin, the metal rang base, and was flung back with scorn at the utterer. And thus, too pure to be assailable even by calumny, doing, in unconscious humility, a great service to their kind, seeking first in faith and earnestness the kingdom of God and his righteousness, those two of God's children, joined together by Him with His own blessing, went on hand-

in-hand, fearing no evil, through the paradise of love, where He had placed them for a little season, to make them strong against the coming time, when He should require them to come forth and fight manfully, as his soldiers and servants, in the great battle of life.

In May, 1798, King Frederic William III. set off to receive the homage of his provinces; he went first to Königsberg, the Queen having started a day or two previously, because, as she was expecting her confinement before very long, it was desirable that she should only make short stages; they arrived at their destination nearly at the same time. The Queen undertook this journey, because she and her husband being always happiest when together, they did not wish to be separated unnecessarily. All extra ceremonial had been strictly prohibited at the various towns which the royal party was to visit, on account of the Queen's health, so that, says one of the many memoirs of Queen Louisa, the receptions of the new sovereigns seemed like "a succession of family fêtes." At Stargard, nine little girls brought Louisa flowers, and one of them told her that their number should have been ten, but that one child had been sent home because she "looked so ugly." Like most gentle affectionate women, Louisa was very fond of little children,* and additionally so since she had been a mother; children always came to her without fear, and received her caresses gladly: the thought, therefore, of this poor little one "sitting at home and weeping its bitter childish tears" on her account, was more than she could bear, so she sent to fetch the child, that she might comfort it herself out of her tender mother's heart. At a muster of troops in another place, she saw a grey-headed old man feebly trying to make his way through the crowd, in order to obtain a sight of her; she immediately begged an officer to go and bring him nearer that he might see her plainly. The old man lifted his cap from his silver hair, and took a long, steady look at the fair face that

* She said, "Die Kinder-Welt ist Meine Welt."

smiled upon him so kindly, wondering whether, when, before long now, he should see the angels of heaven, their faces would be very different from that. At Köslin the people came to her carriage and begged her to alight and taste their "Eierkuchen;" at Dantzig they had built a bower for her on the Karlsberg, whence she might have a beautiful view of the surrounding landscape; after her departure, they called the place by her name (Luisens-hain), that it might not be forgotten where the young Queen had stood to look over their country; thus, in most of the places she visited on this journey, some particular spot where she had stood, or sat, was consecrated, as it were, to her, and kept sacred "as a sort of family altar" ever afterwards.

When, subsequently, she visited Silesia with the King, no restrictions on the score of health being necessary, her enjoyment was intense, for the charm of beautiful scenery which always had a powerful effect upon her imagination, was now enhanced by the pleasure of viewing it by her husband's side. Eylert describes how, on their visit to the Riesengebirge, the King, as they ascended on horseback, rode first, playfully endeavouring to prevent her from catching a glimpse of the view, until she had attained the exact point where the whole glorious landscape might burst upon her sight at once; whilst she made sly attempts from time to time to get a peep over his shoulder from behind; but when the summit was reached, and a scene of wild, stern majesty—mountains towering peak above peak, bleak, lonely rocks, and awful precipices—revealed itself, the King stood gazing, silent and reverential, and she beside him, with folded hands and awe-filled eyes, both paying mute homage in that grand temple of the God of Nature. The next day they visited the mines, and found a party of the miners prepared with a boat, to convey them through the subterraneous passage of the Stollen-water, at the Fuchs-grabe. One of the boatmen, when he had grown old, and Louisa had long forsaken earth, used to tell how, as the boat passed along,—glimpses of

the dark water beneath, and the rocky roof above, being revealed at intervals by the torch-light,—when the distant and solemn tones of the hymn “Praise ye the Lord, the mighty King of honour,” came rolling grandly along the vaulted passage, she grasped her husband’s hand, as he sat beside her, (for it was his favourite air,) and whispered almost below her breath, “Slowly, good steersman; oh! slowly.” “In all my life I never saw a woman with such a face as hers. She looked grand like a Queen, and yet as simple and friendly as a child. Mein Gott! what a woman that was,” the old man used to say, and the tears would trickle down his withered cheeks as he added, “Why did the dear God let her die so early?” The Queen herself put her own present into the hands of the men who had procured her so much pleasure; and the ducats thus bestowed were not spent, but preserved as holy relics by them.*

The simple folks of Silesia treated her with an affectionate, though respectful familiarity, that won her love in an especial degree; at one place the women brought her a set of baby-linen of their own weaving; at Hundsfield, they decked out the horses they had to provide for her carriage, with flowers, bows of ribbon, and gold and silver tinsel, as was their custom at a wedding.† On this, and similar journeys, the halts, when the pleasant meal was spread under the trees in the open air, and when the hands of Louisa herself arranged all for comfort and elegance at the rustic table, were seasons of particular enjoyment. Sometimes, when the people lined the road for some distance, before reaching a town, the King would lean back, exhausted with the effort of constantly bowing to them, and exclaim, as he saw his wife still returning their salutations, with as beaming a smile as ever on her beautiful lips, “How can you hold out so long?” and she would reply, “Do look at the good, kind people, with their honest eyes!”

When at home, the King and Queen resumed their old sim-

* Eylert.

† See Rautenberg’s “Luise Königin von Preussen eine Denkmal.”

ple happy mode of life at Paretz. In the autumn of 1798, they gave a harvest feast to the peasants of the place. Köckeritz describes this country fête, as well as the way in which the King and Queen passed their time here: "I have spent happy days with our gracious ruler, at Paretz. We have diverted ourselves extremely well, and enjoyed, to the full, all the pleasures of a country life. These good people enjoy so thoroughly the simplicity of nature, when entirely free from constraint; they take a hearty part in the quaint expression of the pleasure of the country folks. Especially at the joyous harvest supper, the fair and noble royal lady forgot her rank, and mingled in the jocund dance of the young village men and maidens, and danced with them merrily, in the best meaning of the words freedom and equality. I myself did not remember my five and fifty years, and danced with her, and so also did the Frau Oberhofmeisterin von Voss, being invited by our gracious master. Oh! how happy we all were!" Köckeritz had been appointed Adjutant to the Prince, during the life of King Frederic William II. His character strongly resembled that of his master in many respects, and had unfortunately the same failing—a want of self-confidence. But he was like him in his simplicity and integrity of purpose, and like him also in his sincere and earnest piety. A strong friendship subsisted between the two men thus similarly constituted. The crown Princess treated Köckeritz with the greatest distinction, because he was her husband's friend, and because he was a good man; both equally binding motives with her. Eylert relates, that observing the old man always to retire after dinner, though she and her husband would have preferred his remaining, she watched him, and found that he withdrew to smoke a pipe. The next day she had one in readiness, and lighting it herself, presented it to him, saying, that now, nothing need deprive her and her husband of the pleasure of feeling that he was quite at home with them. The same author gives manifold anecdotes, all proving the kind, unselfish care

with which the wishes and feelings of even their lowest attendants were consulted by these two rarely-constituted persons—the care with which they sought an opportunity for repairing any inadvertent or hasty expression towards them, as in the case of the servant, who, at one place where the Schwarz-brod of the country,—which the King always took when travelling,—had been found bad, provided white bread when they re-visited it, and was reprimanded for providing *luxuries* by the King, who did not know why it was done, but who afterwards made amends by a kind speech, and rewarded the forethought by a present. And in the instance of the poor woman, who, having wandered unconsciously into the Queen's seat at church, sat down there, at the sign of a kind lady, and was afterwards terrified at the reproaches of the Grand Marshal, for having sat in the presence of the Queen; when Louisa, hearing of the result of what she had intended in kindness, knew no rest until she had sought out Eylert himself, and sent him to comfort the poor creature. These and a thousand more such incidents* might be related, all showing how deeply the pre-

* Eylert also relates a story of a poor fisherman's widow who came to see whether the "brother of the dead Prince Louis" would complete the cottage which that Prince had begun to build for her, for, said she, "Syn broder war en ehrlik gut man, und ich denke he wart et ok sien (Platt-Deutsch for "his brother was an honourable, good man, and I think he may be so too"). The King built the cottage, and the woman brought him a dish of "Neun-auge" (lampreys) as his reward. He took them to the Queen, saying, "Siehst du? Aemtchen bringt Käppchen," and she decorated the dish with flowers at dinner, and sent it, with an arch glance to her husband.

The King used generally to breakfast in the Queen's apartments, where fresh fruit, his favourite accompaniment to this meal, was always provided for him. One day, seeing a new cap on her toilette table, he asked how much it cost? "Oh! it was very cheap," said she, "it only cost four Thalers." "Four Thalers? Do you call that cheap?" said the King, and beckoning to an old soldier, Christian Brande by name, who was a favourite with him, from a window, he signed to him to come in. When the old man entered the room, the King said, "Do you see that pretty lady on the sofa? She is very rich—she gave four Thalers for that thing there; go and ask her to give you so much." The Queen laughed, and gave him the money, and then pointing to her husband, said, roguishly, "You see that fine gentleman there at the window? he is much richer than I, he gives me all I have; go and ask him to give you twice as much as I have done!"

cept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" was impressed upon the hearts of both Frederic William and Louisa. It may be imagined, that with so intimate a knowledge of the habits and wants of the people, as, from her frequent intercourse with them Louisa possessed, the demands upon her purse were not few; besides, her hand was always open, it was so much easier to give than to withhold; the claims of destitute children and mothers she could never even try to resist. Thus, it not unfrequently happened, that her resources were exhausted when some urgent call made her particularly anxious for a supply. Wolter, her chamberlain, told her, on one of these occasions, that he could give her no more, as it would set his accounts wrong. She was in great perplexity how to meet the demand, when, on going to her *escritoire* shortly afterwards, she found the recently empty drawer, replenished. "Ah! what angel has put this here?" exclaimed she. "There are so many angels," said her husband, "I only know the name of *one*; but you know the text, 'God giveth to his beloved sleeping.' " *

I must give one more scene from the pages of Bishop Eylert before I pass from the private, to the public life of Queen Louisa. She and her husband were spending the Sunday evening with their chosen friends, Eylert, Köckeritz, and Brühl, on the "Pfauen Insel." † They had both been much impressed by the former's sermon, preached in the course of the day, on those words from the Book of Ruth, "Where thou goest, I will go," &c. The beauty of the calm quiet evening and the sounds of distant music which floated to them on the soft summer air, aided the effect of the reflections with which their minds were engaged; a sort of solemn Sabbath-stillness gradually stole over the whole party. At length the King rose, and saying

These and a variety of other anecdotes, given by Eylert, are to be found in detail in Mrs. Richardson's "History of Queen Louisa."

* This passage in the 127th Psalm is thus translated in the German version instead of as we have it, "For so he giveth his beloved sleep."

† Peacock's Island.

softly to his wife, "I and my house, we will serve the Lord," withdrew into the deepening shadows of the trees. With a ruler animated by such sentiments the country of Prussia was sure of a blessing sooner or later.

But occupied as Louisa was with all her happy domestic employments, and with her children, whom she kept beside her as much as possible, and upon whose infant minds the first indelible principles of love and faith and duty, were impressed by herself, and enforced by her own lip and eye, besides this best mother's privilege and duty, and besides the time she carefully preserved for her books and her music—for she was an appreciating reader of good books, and like her namesake, Louisa of Orange, a tasteful performer, both instrumental and vocal—it must not be imagined that the claims of the Court and of society were neglected; on the contrary, no Queen was ever more punctual in her appointments—none ever more gracefully dignified in maintaining her position, at the same time that she banished much of the formality which had hitherto made the society of the Court so tedious. Eylert describes the smile with which, on entering the room, leaning on her husband's arm, she greeted the waiting circle, as something altogether exquisite; and then the few words—just the right words—for every one, and the happy tact which set all at their ease, without making them forget their place—even the exquisite taste of her dress, all combined to produce an effect which, though gradual, was marked and most beneficial. "The Court," says the author of the memoir I have so often already quoted,* "soon began to resemble a domestic circle;" men who had formerly foresworn its precincts, because taste, learning, and good feeling had no longer place there, were now commonly to be seen in the Queen's assemblies. Another author remarks, that "the Court is especially the model of a household; every intelligent woman, every careful mother, should have a portrait of the Queen in the family room. Formerly it was necessary to flee with wife and

* Luise Königin von Preussen."

children, from the Court as from an infected spot ; now one can withdraw from the general corruption of morals to the Court as to a happy island. A young man used formerly to go to the remote provinces, or at least to families unconnected with the town and Court, if he wished to find a good wife—now a man may go to the Court as the chief seat of all that is best and fairest, and think himself fortunate in receiving a wife from the hands of the Queen. True wonders of transubstantiation are these, which have changed a Court into a family, a throne into a holy place, a royal marriage into a union of hearts.”

No remark can be needed, after such testimony as this, upon the purifying effect which the mere example of one couple was producing upon the manners of a whole people, nor upon the duty which such instances show to be imperative upon all, in whatever position of influence, to live themselves as others *ought* to live.

It is painful to leave this first season of Louisa's pure, unalloyed happiness, to follow her through all the trials and sufferings which were necessary, even to such a character as hers, thoroughly to “purge away all the dross” which, as she was a child of sinful humanity, still lurked within its depths, and to render it, cleansed from all earthly stains, snow-white and radiant, a fit companion for the angels who were waiting to lead her up to the bright mansions where her Father called her to dwell.

Before proceeding to relate the events which so rudely roused Louisa and her husband from their dream of happiness, and plunged them into that rough sea of misfortune whose boisterous waves broke the heart of the gentle Queen with their cruel buffeting, bearing her to an early grave, and leaving her husband a desolate and shipwrecked man upon the barren strand of life, it is necessary to take a glance at the various causes which ultimately produced these events.

On the death of Frederic William II., a King of whom one of his own subjects exclaims, “Well for him—well for us—that

he is no more ! the State was near its dissolution,"* he left to his successor an inheritance of "three very bad things, namely, the demoralisation of the nation, the ministers who had formed his own Cabinet, and the exhaustion of the treasury."† The French campaign of 1792 had drained the resources of the latter. Frederic William II. was no economist, and at his death his debts amounted, some say to twenty, some to forty million Thalers.‡ His son endeavoured to liquidate these claims by the strictest limitation of his personal, household, and official outlay ; but economy in matters of this sort does not go far towards replenishing the exhausted coffers of a nation. The second part of this fatal legacy, the ministry who were in power during the important period of the early part of Frederic William III.'s reign formed a triumvirate, the principal characteristics of whose members, were, respectively, weakness, craft, and self-interest. These three men were Haugwitz, Lombard, and Lucchesini. Haugwitz, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, to whom allusion has been made before, was a man of neither character nor principle ; he was a mystic and a sensualist ; now Austrian, now French,—never Prussian of any worth ; always at the beck of Lombard, (his cabinet-rath).§ Lombard,|| like most of the French colony to which he belonged, was more French than Prussian in his political views. He was sent on a mission to Napoleon at Brussels in 1803, and was dazzled by the flattery bestowed upon him by the First Consul, and the glitter of the six thousand Napoleons d'or¶ which found their

* Massenbach ; see Vehse.

† Vehse.

‡ Ibid. See also "Vertraute Briefe."

§ Gentz says, "Lombard exercised the most entire sway over Haugwitz, I have heard him say to his brother, "Tell Count Haugwitz to come to me to-morrow morning, I have something to say to him."—See Vehse.

|| His father was a *friseur*, the father of his wife a barber. He used to jest upon the lowliness of his birth, speaking of his father as a *feu mon père de poudreuse mémoire*, and asking his wife whether it was more correct to say, "*les hirondelles frisent ou rasent la surface des eaux.*"

¶ Merkel, editor of the "Freinuthigen," a political journal.

way into his needy purse, and which bought him—and with him, Prussia. Lucchesini was an Italian by nation ; crafty and calculating by nature ; neither French nor Prussian by feeling ; a thoroughly selfish, interested man, who, so long as he served himself, cared not whom he disserved. Frederic William III. had, unfortunately, but little insight into character ; he took people at their own estimate. Upright and honourable himself, he did not discover that others were not so ; distrustful of his own really sound opinion, he took that of men who were swayed by self-interest and ambition. Thus he was led to commit the management of the kingdom to characters like these, and thus, “as the hour of destiny arrived, was Frederic William completely deceived — deceived by a characterless courtier ; a half-Frenchman, who made it his boast to act as if wholly so ; and a crafty Italian adventurer, to whom nothing was so important as his own advantage.”* Yet one more legacy of evil omen, had Frederic William II. left to his successor—the consequences of the treaty of Basle, by which he had “abandoned the house of Orange, sacrificed Holland, laid open the empire to French invasion, and prepared the ruin of the ancient Germanic Constitution.”†

Here were some of the primary causes of Prussia’s misfortunes ; yet, with Frederic the Great at the head of affairs, worse conjunctures of circumstances than these, had been brought to a prosperous issue. But that which rendered the late monarch’s unfortunate legacies so fatal to the kingdom, was, undoubtedly, that want of self-reliance in his son which led him to place confidence in, and to follow the guidance of such men as those who formed his ministry ; hence, also, resulted the fact that his political measures were so frequently hesitating, the execution of them dilatory, and the result of them unsuccessful.

The position of affairs in Europe had long been becoming more and more critical. The French armies under their daring young commander, after revolutionising all the smaller neigh-

* Merkel ; see Vohse.

† Alison’s “History of Europe.”

bouring States, and compelling Austria to sue for peace, were once more threatening the very existence of that empire. The New Coalition turned to Prussia to aid in quelling the arrogance of a foe, who was thus placing in jeopardy the whole structure of the continental system. But Frederic William was averse to war upon principle; his ministry were likewise averse to it, though *not* from the same cause. Under these circumstances, it was decided that Prussia should preserve a strict neutrality. This policy was satisfactory to no party, lost admirable chances of re-establishing the balance of power in Europe by a timely interference, and at last, by irritating the conqueror, and provoking his contempt, prepared the way for the dismemberment of Prussia. Prince Louis Ferdinand said bitterly but truly with regard to it, "From the very love of peace, Prussia takes a hostile position towards all other Powers, and will thereby be one day mercilessly overthrown by one of those Powers, which may find it the right moment to make war. Then we shall fall, without support, and perhaps without honour."

But the leaning of Frederic William's Cabinet towards Napoleon prevented the neutrality of Prussia from being actually so strict as it professed to be. Napoleon held out the annexation of Hanover as a lure to entice her into an alliance with him, and though Frederic William's conscientious scruples made him hesitate to commit so gross an infraction on the rights of nations, still he felt that the bait was a tempting one. The death of the Russian Emperor, Paul I., and the accession of Alexander, in 1801, having detached Russia from the armed neutrality of the Northern Powers, another attempt was made by that State, in alliance with England and Austria, to induce Prussia to join their alliance. Hardenberg's appointment to succeed Haugwitz, in 1804, had given hopes of more vigorous measures, but though it did, in all probability, prevent an alliance with France on the above-mentioned disgraceful terms, yet Prussia still clung to her old system of neutrality; and when the Russian minister demanded permission for the passage

of troops through the Prussian territories, the request gave so much offence, as even to produce an order for troops to march towards the Russian boundaries; when a hasty movement of the French Emperor, which violated the articles of Prussia's neutrality, without even the ceremony of asking leave, by marching French troops through her territory of Anspach, caused her suddenly to listen to the proposals of the Emperor Alexander.

Parties ran high meanwhile at Berlin; even the common people formed into factions. There were the war party, the English party, the peace party, &c., whilst the press and even the theatres became the medium of party.* Prince Louis Ferdinand, son of Frederic the Great's youngest brother Ferdinand—perhaps the most extraordinarily-gifted man in Prussia,—was at the head of the war party; he had no opinion of the system of neutrality. He foresaw the “chains that awaited Prussia.” “It is our weakness, our pusillanimity,” said he, “which will make it easy for Napoleon to subjugate Europe.” Fiery and prompt in action himself, his cousin's hesitation and want of self-confidence excited his pity and also his contempt. One day in the Museum, he asked the guardian of the place whom a bust, which he pointed out, represented; the man (a Suabian) answered, “that is the war-god Maresh.†” “Yes,” exclaimed the Prince, “this is the god March! and *that* is the god Halt!” pointing to a bust of the King which stood near. Nevertheless, he entertained a high respect for the King's character and natural talents; he said of him, “I know only one man in the Prussian States, who, through his knowledge of

* Unzelman, the actor, especially, introduced extempore political allusions into his parts; he was threatened with imprisonment, nevertheless he still continued to throw out inuendos of this kind: one night a fellow actor whispered to him, after one of these allusions, “That's punishable.” He replied, going on with his part, “Punishable, did you say? What patriot would hesitate to add his mite to build the altar of the Fatherland?” “You will certainly be imprisoned,” said the other. “I shall be imprisoned? No matter; better Prussian *eingesteckt* than French *hohngeneckt*!”

† The provincial pronunciation of the name Mars.

affairs, and his abilities, would be in a position to save the kingdom, if he would only trust himself, and that man is Frederic William III."

The murder of the Duc d'Enghien, in 1804, excited the most violent feelings of indignation in all the other States of Europe, in Prussia particularly; even the gentle young Queen, stimulated by a just abhorrence of the perpetrator of this crime, was induced to wish for war. Prince Louis Ferdinand, who, like every one else that came within her influence, admired her exceedingly, endeavoured to induce her to rouse her husband to exertion: of course scandalous but most false accusations were immediately laid against Louisa's conduct by the peace-party, so soon as it became evident that the Prince sought the Queen's society; but these reports did not reach her ears till afterwards, by means of Napoleon's agents. Her brother and others who were known to possess influence with her, were also employed to endeavour to obtain the use of her power over the King; thus her mind, roused to the state of her country, became constantly filled with that one absorbing subject: still, however, she expressed no opinion upon the subject which was engrossing her thoughts, and filling her mind with anxiety. The infraction of the Prussian neutrality, by the march of the French troops through Anspach, had excited her indignation in common with that of the country generally, to a high degree; when, therefore, the Emperor of Russia came to Berlin, in 1805, she received and entertained him with a pleasure which showed how entirely her heart was on the side of his party. The Emperor Alexander, then in the flower of his young manhood, enthusiastic and ardently chivalrous, was much charmed with the lovely Prussian Queen, and greatly taken also with her reserved and silent but friendly husband, whose calm, grave character offered such a contrast to his own fervid enthusiasm.

A somewhat romantic episode is said to have taken place between the two young monarchs, who, visiting at midnight the tomb of Frederic the Great, clasped hands, and vowed eternal

friendship and alliance above his ashes. The convention of Potsdam was the result of the Emperor's visit; still, however, Prussia remained inactive, and even tried to compose her own difference with France, and to mediate between that country and the other Powers; and when Napoleon declined to treat with Hardenberg, Haugwitz was recalled, and despatched to inform him of the Convention of Potsdam, and of the Prussian proposals in accordance with its views. But finding the Emperor upon the eve of the battle of Austerlitz, Haugwitz delayed the execution of his mission until he should see the result of the day; and then, upon being received coldly by Napoleon, who showed him a copy of the Convention which he had received from sources of his own, telling him there could be, now, no further subject of negotiation, the faithless ambassador forsook the object of his mission, and made that "unholy compact" * with Napoleon, of which the annexation of Hanover to Prussia was the principal condition. When the intelligence arrived at Berlin, the feeling of generous indignation at this base proceeding was universal. "The English party gnashed their teeth; the war party cursed; the poets made epigrams; the Queen was inconsolable: every one saw that the glory of Prussia was buried in the weakness of the Government." † Hardenberg, indignant at an action which brought upon Prussia the deserved reproach of duplicity, cowardice, and cupidity, proffered his resignation: the Queen entreated him not to forsake the Cabinet, of which he was the only influential member, who had either principle or talent; Hardenberg nevertheless retired from his office.

The confederation of the Rhine, the appropriation of Holland as a kingdom for Louis Buonaparte, and of Juliers and Berg as a duchy for Murat; the open allusions made by the French officers, and even by Napoleon himself, ‡ to the fate that awaited

* Vohse.

† "Vertraute Briefe."

‡ Napoleon wrote to his brother Louis at this time, "Prussia and her allies shall be destroyed."—" *Luise Königin von Preussen.*"

Prussia; and the proposed treaty with England, to the total disregard of the Prussian possessions and interests, at last completely opened Frederic William's eyes. He saw on what a precipice he was standing, and, as is often the case with persons of a hesitating disposition, rushed precipitately into action at last.

The Queen, in the meanwhile, had been at Pymont, to take the baths of that place, for her spirits had been much depressed, and her health had suffered severely, owing to the loss of one of her children early in the spring of the year 1806. The people of Berlin said, that she had been sent thither by the war party, who hoped, that in his anxiety for her return, the King would be more inclined to adopt those measures, towards which she was inclined.* This, however, was without foundation, except as regarded her husband's wish for her return. Neither was she ever that active agent of the war party, which she is represented to have been. There was no doubt as to her wishes on the subject; but her agency was rather the tacit one of those unexpressed wishes than anything else, for she had made it a rule, as she herself said,† not to interfere in political affairs. Besides, on that one point, her husband was jealous of anything like an attempt at using influence, even from her; and she respected his wishes far too much to disregard them, even on points in which she was as much interested as in the war question. "The Queen of Prussia," say the "Löschheimer" to the "Neue Feuerbrände," "has never advised either peace or war; and in the government, especially, she has never interfered." She was not ambitious, and had no wish for power; besides, at Pymont, she had heard but little of what was going on; and when her husband met her at Potsdam, on her return, the information that he had declared war on France was altogether news to her.‡

Now, indeed, she was at liberty to display all her enthu-

* "Vertraute Briefe."

† See her conversation with Stein, page 370.

‡ "Luise Königin von Preussen."

siasm in the cause ; and it was expressed in the liveliest manner. Persons who were unfriendly towards her at the time, exclaimed, "How can so good and virtuous a woman as the Queen is said to be, feel so much inclined for war?"* But, as the best men and clearest thinkers in Prussia thought as she did on the subject, there is no need to enter into the question, nor to state that, viewed in themselves, she also, in common with all humane persons, regarded war and bloodshed as fearful evils. The chief female head of the war party was, rather the Princess Radizwill, Prince Louis Ferdinand's sister, than the Queen ; this lady was of a quicker temper, and less docile disposition than Louisa, and she expressed her opinions in the most unqualified terms, speaking of Napoleon with the bitterest hatred and scorn ; whilst the Queen, on the contrary, spoke of him "with an inward shudder, as that before which all of good and pure must fall." But she permitted herself no words of hatred or scornful jesting upon the subject,† it was too deeply felt to admit of that.

Preparations for war were now being carried on with a rapidity to the full as injudicious as the former hesitation had been. Frédéric William was about, with equal bravery and imprudence, to rush single-handed into conflict with an adversary, with whom no continental power had hitherto been able to cope. Such an undertaking should have suggested the most extraordinary precaution and foresight in the adjustment of measures, the most accurate calculation of chances, and, at least, an ample provision of supplies to meet emergencies. But none of these things were attended to as they ought to have been. Plans enough, it is true, there were, some of which might have been successful, with an efficient commander-in-chief to carry them out ; but of such a commander, the Prussian army was unfortunately destitute ; mere conjecture was

* The "Licht-Strahlen," in the years 1805-7, quote this remark, and comment upon it.

† See "Luise Königin von Preussen."

allowed to take the place of calculation in its councils ; and even the commissariat department was so wretched a failure, that, before the army had been long in the field, both men and horses were starving. Von Cölln gives as an instance of the disgraceful neglect in this department, the fact, that a horse belonging to the service was found to be in such a wretched condition, that six Berlin street urchins bought it for six Groschen, and all mounting upon its back, rode in triumph into the Thiergarten, thus furnishing a sufficiently lucid commentary upon the application of the generous aids, which, although it was a year of scarcity, all the provinces were pouring into the treasury.*

But the excitement and exhilaration caused by the prospect of action, prevented the consequences of this precipitation from being foreseen by more than the few. Troops were marching from all quarters, all was bustle and motion. The Baireuth Regiment, upon the death of the Margrave, had been re-named the "Queen's Regiment of Dragoons." As it passed Berlin, in its road to Thuringia, the Queen went out to meet it, and headed it in her carriage (not on horseback, as has been stated by some authors), dressed in a spencer of the regimental colours, a compliment which so gratified the men, that they begged for the garment, and preserved it as a sacred relic of their Queen ever afterwards. This was the occasion of that famous bulletin of Napoleon's, one of a long series of offensive documents directed against the beautiful young Queen, whom any other man in Europe, friend or foe, would have honoured for her enthusiasm in her country's cause. "The Queen of Prussia is with the army," runs the bulletin, "dressed as an amazon, wearing the uniform of her dragoons, writing twenty letters a day, to spread the conflagration in all directions. We seem to behold Armida in her madness, setting fire to her palace.

* Pomerania and Magdeburg prepared to deliver corn gratis. All the provinces emulated one another in their liberality. The King was even obliged to limit their contributions.

After her, follows Prince Louis of Prussia, a young Prince, full of bravery and courage, who, hurried on by the spirit of party, flatters himself that he shall find a great renown in the vicissitudes of war. Following the example of these illustrious persons, all the Court cries, 'To arms !' But, when war shall have reached them, all will seek to exculpate themselves from having been instrumental in bringing its thunder to the peaceful plains of the north." *

These bulletins, which caused Louisa so much more grief and annoyance than the paltry lies they circulated were worth, although they have long assumed their true importance, were then matter of so much discussion as to their truth or falsehood, that most of the Queen's historians have sought either to disprove them, or to apologise, as it were, for the fact that she followed her husband to the very battle-field. Therefore, since so much has been said and written upon the subject, I adduce some of the testimonies which have been brought to her purity of intention, and freedom from the mere desire for novelty, in this part of her conduct ; although full many a noble-hearted, true English lady can testify, that it is no unnatural or unwomanly thing, for a wife to wish to accompany her husband to the scene of danger, perhaps of death. Besides Louisa's own desire, then, to be with the husband from whom she had promised to be parted only by death, it was *his* wish also, and that would have been quite enough for her without any other inducement. Moreover, she knew that her presence cheered and encouraged the soldiers. "The Queen has been blamed," says Von Cölln, "because on that fearful day (Jena) the death hour of the Prussian State, she was still in the midst of the army. This is too hard ! This illustrious lady had never employed herself with political affairs, till Alexander acquainted her with the perils which threatened her house and the State ; whether this danger were real or imaginary is now matter of indifference ; the Queen was not able to cast a very deep

* See Alison's "History of Europe."

glance into state affairs. Enough, this idea stirred up all her womanly feelings; she saw her husband the King, her children, the succession, all that was dear and precious to her, in danger,—she sacrificed everything then to dare this danger, and to share it with her husband. For this reason did the gentle Louisa betake herself to the army; therefore, on the 13th of October, on foot in the streets of Weimar, did she show herself to the troops, enlivening by her courage, and exalting by her presence, all that there was to enliven and encourage. It was she who thus contributed to inspire her husband with that courage which showed him so heroic a soldier in the conflict.”

Again, an author personally so much opposed to Von Cölln, that he thought it necessary to furnish “Löscheimer”* to quench his “Neue Feuerbrände,”† writes:—“The Queen of Prussia followed her husband like a good wife, who was anxious with regard to his and her children’s fate. She knew that she was beloved, and she showed herself to the soldiers on all occasions, and was received as their good genius.” No wonder, then, that Napoleon, knowing this, should have reproached the Queen of Prussia, even with the fact, that she and her children took leave of the troops before their departure,—like the royal lady and “mother” of our own land, when she received many a soldier’s blessing as she bade her army “God speed!” before its departure to a foreign land, not long ago.

After remaining some time at Charlottenburg, the Queen accompanied her husband, in the middle of September, to Naumburg, on the Saale. A moment’s glance is here necessary at the position of the Prussian army. The King, with that unfortunate tendency to repose a misplaced confidence in others, of which he so often gave instances, in no way undeceived by the campaign of 1792, although he had himself been a witness of the mismanagement of the Duke of Brunswick, committed his army to that general’s command. Brunswick “might have had talent once, but since the manifesto of 1792, he had

* Fire-buckets.

† New Fire-brands.

ceased to be that for which he had been taken. Now he was a sickly old man, constantly vacillating between *wollen* and *nicht-wollen*; who could talk of a disposition, but not carry it out; the new art of war, and the rapidity of the execution of modern strategy, were wholly strange to him, those who commanded under him neither had, nor could have, any respect for him.”* Frau von Voss was not far off the truth when, as he one day complained to her of his military misfortunes, she said, as is reported, “Ah! yes; but we two old women cannot mend the matter by our gossip now!” But old women are not well qualified for the conduct of a campaign, therefore the manœuvres of the Prussian army presented the most lamentable scene of vacillation, confusion and incapability, where, besides the one great want of an efficient commander, there was a fearful list of other wants; “certain intelligence of the movements of the enemy was wanting—a numerous reserve was wanting; An efficient commissariat was wanting—an accurate knowledge of the ground was wanting. Plan there was none; it seemed as if the army had been *blown together by the wind* without aim or destination, but posted by chance upon the Saale, so that Napoleon could with all convenience march straight upon Berlin through the space between the Saale and the Elbe; and in order that he might not find the slightest obstacle in the way, the so-called army of reserve was posted, not on the right bank of the Elbe, but at Magdeburg!”* Added to all this, the army, which was in fact “not a connected army at all, but only several divisions,” was to be opposed, not to a similarly-constituted enemy—when, as generally happens in such cases, the mutual mistakes furnish mutual teaching, and the art of war is learned by each party, by the time of the conclusion of peace—but to Napoleon Buonaparte and his veteran troops: the Prussian army, moreover, was, partly from principle,† but chiefly from neglect, wholly destitute of spies,

* “Vertraute Briefe.”

† “Löschheimer.” The King objected to the system of obtaining information by

whilst Napoleon knew almost every word that passed in the Prussian councils-of-war.* It may be imagined, under these circumstances, with what foreboding the thinking part of the Prussian army began to look upon the issue of the campaign. The King was depressed and uneasy; he could not fail to see that things were going fearfully wrong,† but he could not see how to right them. The Queen shared his anxiety to the fullest extent, although, says Vohse, "she was the most collected person in the camp." Gentz, who visited the camp at Naumburg (on 3rd Oct.), had an interview with her there; she wished to ask his opinion of the probable results of the campaign. Depressed by all he had heard and seen, Gentz looked forward to the approaching audience with no very pleasurable anticipation, feeling that he must either be a prophet of evil or disguise the truth. "But," says he, "my foreboding deceived me, for instead of increasing my trouble it comforted me and relieved me, and had not my confidence already vanished too far into the distance I should have recovered it on this occasion. For a year I had heard constant praises of this Princess; I was, therefore, prepared to find her something quite different from that which in my earlier conceptions I had pictured to myself; but the noble and majestic qualities which she developed every moment during a conversation of three-quarters of an hour, I had not expected. She reasoned with precision, connection, and energy, at the same time displaying a prudence which I should have found admirable in a man; and yet in all she said, she manifested such deep feeling, that one could not for a moment forget that it was a woman's mind to which one paid the

this means; but when Prince Hohenlohe applied to Brunswick for the means of paying for such intelligence, his application was never even answered.

* Napoleon was said to have been supplied with the minutest details of all that passed in the Prussian camp by means of the people of Lombard and Lucchesini, and also through the Duke of Brunswick's mistress, a Frenchwoman.

† "Things cannot go well," said he, "for all is in indescribable confusion. The generals would not take my opinion if I offered it, I do not understand military affairs sufficiently well. I hope I may be wrong."—" *Luise Königin von Preussen.*"

tribute of admiration. There was not a word which had not its purpose, not a single reflection, or expression of feeling which was not in strict unison with the general subjects of discussion; so that the result was a combination of dignity, benevolence and elegance, such as I had never before met with, nor imagined. Her first question was, what I thought of the war; 'I do not ask to gather courage,' said she; 'thank God, that I do not need. I know, also, that if you have an unfavourable opinion, you certainly will not tell me. But I should like to know on what those, who are in a position to judge of the posture of affairs, found their judgment, in order to see whether their reasons and mine coincide.' I brought forward all that occurred to me on the fair side of the question; I laid especial emphasis on the state of public opinion, the favourable dispositions of contemporary Powers, and on the zealous wishes in which all parties in Germany emulated each other, that Prussia's undertaking should be crowned with success. She spoke of her apprehensions as to the light in which public opinion, especially that of other countries, would view this expedition, as she well knew that the general disposition was not favourable to Prussia; yet, for some weeks latterly, she had heard reports which had given her more confidence in this respect. 'You know the past better than I; is not this a moment in which it should be forgotten?' said she, in reference to this subject. She showed herself to be fully acquainted with the details of the war in 1805, and spoke of the misfortunes of Austria with deep feeling, several times I saw her eyes fill with tears; she related with touching simplicity, that on the day when she heard of the disasters of the Austrian army, her son (Frederic William IV., then crown Prince) had for the first time worn his uniform, and she had said to him, 'I hope that, on the day when you wear this dress in battle, your first thought will be to avenge your unhappy brethren.' There was a tenderness in her manner of speaking of the Emperor and Empress, such as she might have wished others to use in

speaking of the King and herself under similar circumstances. She mentioned several of the generals, Prince Hohenlohe, Prince Louis, Schmettau, Rüchel, Blücher, but the name of Brunswick never once passed her lips. She asked me if I had seen an article in the 'Publicist,' which made an unworthy comment upon her political conduct; 'God knows I have never been asked for counsel upon public affairs, and have never desired it. If I had been asked, I confess it freely, I should have given my voice for war; for I believe it was necessary. Our position had become so critical, that we were obliged, at all risks, to disentangle ourselves, and it was pressingly necessary to put an end to the ill-will and suspicion which were harboured against us. We were called upon by a principle of honour, and consequently of duty, so far as I understand it, to take this course.' With regard to the prejudice which she was accused of harbouring against the Russians, she said it was the most absurd of accusations, for, as regarded his zeal and devotion in the cause, and his personal virtues, she always had, and always should render full justice to the Emperor Alexander: yet, far from regarding Russia as the principal instrument in the liberation of Europe, she looked upon its assistance only as a last resource, and she was firmly convinced that the main source of safety was alone to be found in the strict union of all those who prided themselves on bearing the German name. There was great division of opinion upon the subject of the Queen's continued presence in the camp, she was herself naturally averse to leave her husband, unless there was an absolute necessity for the step; Lombard expressed his disapprobation of her remaining in the harshest terms, whilst on the other side, men of equal discernment and less doubtful integrity, attached the utmost importance to the prolongation of her stay. General Kalkreuth, amongst others, entreated Gentz, if he could find an occasion to do so, to protest against her departure. 'I know what I ask,' said he, 'her presence is of the greatest importance.' " Gentz continues, "I could

not give an opinion, I could only say, that the Queen's conduct during her residence at the camp, had been free from the slightest reproach, and had displayed a dignity, discretion, and prudence, such as *ought* to distinguish a Princess of her rank, and which are very rarely to be met with in such circumstances as those under which she was placed. I thought, that when viewed from all points, and disconnected from the danger which she incurred by remaining, which was as nothing in her eyes, that the question decided itself for her remaining. Seizing a favourable opportunity therefore, I said, 'I have remarked that the question is much mooted how to prolong your Majesty's stay in Dresden* for a few days.' 'I acknowledge,' she replied, 'that under other circumstances, a longer stay in Dresden would have occasioned me much pleasure, but now I should have no enjoyment in it; my mind is too much occupied with serious reflections, besides I do not know what my position might become; but in this, as in all other things, I submit myself wholly to the King's will. I dread also the alarming reports with which one is constantly harassed when remote from the scene of action, and you know how active ill-will already is.' She had said the day before to Goertv, 'Is it possible that they wish to banish me to Berlin?' She said that so far as depended upon herself, she would remain." On the termination of the audience Louisa dismissed Gentz with a few kind words, "the sweetness of which," said he, "I shall never forget." This account from the pen of a statesman, and a man of discernment like Gentz, is all sufficient to prove that it was no mere uxoriousness on the part of Frederic William, which had induced him, weakly, to bring his wife to camp, only to prove an additional source of anxiety on the field of battle, and an encumbrance in case of retreat. On the contrary, he needed her sustaining presence to quicken his own hope and faith, and to inspire his troops with fresh courage and enthusiasm.

* She would have to pass Dresden on quitting the army.

The affair of Saalfeld, which took place October 10, and which cost the life of the gallant Prince Louis, was the first severe disaster experienced by the Prussians. With the unhappy fatality which seems everywhere to have posted the wrong men in the wrong places throughout this campaign, this fiery young Prince had been appointed to the command of the vanguard of the left wing under Prince Hohenlohe, with positive orders *not* to engage the enemy; but, carried away by his impetuous bravery, he neglected the order, and, with the 6000 men under his command, attacked a body of 30,000 French. Despite the overwhelming superiority of the enemy, the contest lasted for five hours, and was carried on with desperate valour. The Prince, as a last chance of retrieving the day, made an impetuous charge at the head of his cavalry; but, outflanked and enveloped by the enemy, they fell into disorder, and the rout became general. The manner in which the gallant young Prince met his death is not exactly known. The most probable account seems to be, that finding himself alone, he put his horse at a high embankment, intending to gain the *chaussée* below; but the animal either receiving a shot, or catching its foot in the leap, he was dismounted. He then proceeded on foot; on encountering two of the enemy, one of them on horseback, they bade him surrender; he refused to do so, and was slain, fighting desperately against this odds. All that is certain on the subject, however, is, that his body was found by some peasants, gashed by thirteen wounds. Thus did Prince Louis keep the oath which he, Rüchel and Blücher had taken the day before going to their posts (as commanders of the vanguards of the three bodies into which the Prussian army was divided). "We pledged our simple, manly words," says he, "to set our lives upon the struggle where glory and honour await us; and, should political freedom and liberality of sentiment be annihilated by defeat, not to survive their ruin." And thus was lost to Prussia one of the rarest combinations of talent, valour, and personal advantages which she probably ever

possessed amongst the sons of her royal house ; although, alas ! these endowments were altogether perverted and wasted, in point of actual practical utility.

A favourite with Nature and Fortune, who had combined to bestow upon him their choicest gifts of mind, body and position, this young man seemed to be the most enviable of mankind ; yet this very prodigality of gifts, which placed him in the lap of luxury and rank, was the cause of his undoing ; there was no scope for him in Prussia, no space to spread his wings and soar. Brilliant in talent, noble and generous in disposition, beautiful as a young god, life was too easy for him ; it presented no difficulties, and his genius required something upon which to wreak itself. The same thing applied to learning, it presented no obstacles to his daring intellect ; it was the same with all his pursuits, they offered nothing to provoke his energy ; music, though he loved it with a passion, formed no exception ; his auditors would sit entranced for hours to listen to his wild extempore rhapsodies upon the piano, but it was no serious study with him. With his fine person and stately bearing, his fair, curly hair and bold, frank blue eyes, backed by an unrivalled power of fascination, what female heart could withstand him ? his loves were as manifold, vivid and brief, as the roses of summer ! He was an idol with the soldiers, on account of his daring courage and heroic generosity,* as well as his frankness and soldierly

* At the end of the campaign of 1792, having had nothing to stay his appetite for fighting, in the Prussian army, he volunteered into that of the Austrians ; here one day, during a sharp engagement, a retreat was ordered. One of the Austrian soldiers, who had been wounded, called to his comrades to carry him with them, out of the road of the advancing enemy. "Will none of you save the poor fellow?" cried Prince Louis. "Then I will go back for him myself;" and, turning back into the midst of the hail of French bullets, he laid the man tenderly upon his shoulder, and carried him back to his troop. The Prince was almost worshipped by the common soldiers after this brave deed. His kindness also to his attendants fettered them to him completely. One winter's day, noticing his valet, pale and shivering behind him in his sledge, "How is it that you have no great coat?" said he. "There was no time to get one before starting," replied the man. The Prince hastily took off his fur mantle, and gave

bearing ; he had great military talent,* and considerable political penetration. Had he only ascended the throne in 1796, instead of Frederic William, what a different destiny would—in all probability—have awaited Prussia, from that which overtook her on the field of Jena ! As it was, Prince Louis was so much splendid material utterly thrown away. He had hoped that when war was necessary—evidently a measure of the merest prudence—an opening would have been made for him to carve a way to fame upon the battle-field ; but shut out, by the wretched policy of the Prussian ministry, from this career, walled up on all sides, within the limited sphere of an apanaged prince, he stifled for want of air : he could but chafe and fret within his narrow prison ; he sought violent bodily exertion as a safety-valve for the wild energy of his spirit ; he delighted in taming ungovernable steeds that no one else dared mount ; here at least was something to struggle with and quell ; often did the lonely rocks and forest solitudes witness the fierce, wild delight of the contest between the two strong, beautiful creatures ; the foaming, maddening beast, straining each starting sinew below, the iron-willed man, with the brow of stern, triumphant power above : for the wildest and loneliest districts in the country were the favourite scenes of his rough rides and dangerous hunting-excursions. He plunged headlong into the wildest, maddest dissipation, not because he cared for it, but he must have something to do. Stein, who knew and loved him well, and who felt what a great work ought to be in store for such a rich nature as this, wrote tender paternal letters of faithful reproof and exhortation to him, to be that which God it to the man, saying, “Seest thou, I have still an overcoat !”—See “Löscheimer.”

* He had rooms fitted up as a military school in his house. One day the professor demanded leave of absence at the hour of the lesson. The Prince gave the required permission, sent away his horse, and himself gave the lesson, demonstrating every point of the subject under discussion with the utmost lucidity, and astonishing his listeners with his power of communicating instruction in the most vivid and impressive manner.—See “Löscheimer.”

had given him the power to be. Then came the long-desired opening, the moment of action,—and in that very gateway of a career of glory, even if of misfortune,* Prince Louis lay a corpse. So darkly hid in the deep waters are the footsteps of God.

The news of this disaster reached the camp the next day (Oct. 11), and caused a universal depression, for Prince Louis had been a favourite with all; and although he and the King could not understand or sympathize with each other, still they had entertained much mutual esteem; and Frederic William's nature was too affectionate not to feel his cousin's death severely. The Queen, too, appreciated his talents, and regarded him with sincere friendship; yet she was the only person who, "when every one else gave way to despondency, had the courage to repress her grief,"† and afford to others the consolation and hope, which she herself did not feel on this occasion.

The Prussian army was now on the eve of an engagement; I draw upon the same perspicuous writer who has already furnished me with so many particulars of the then existing state of affairs,‡ for a rapid glance at the position of the respective armies before the day of Jena and Auerstadt. During the commencement of October the Prussian commander-in-chief had occupied his time in holding councils of war of most diverse tendency, none of the plans proposed in which were put into execution: at last "General Tauentzien, with a weak division, moved, in the direction of the enemy, towards the right bank of the Saale, and Prince Louis was posted with the advance guard at Saalfeld. The magazines in Naumburg, Merseburg, and Halle, were left unprotected on the right bank of the river, while the main army

* Prince Louis himself augured ill of the chances of success in the contest, begun so much too late, and therefore so much too early. His mother, like the greater part of the Court, looked upon success as certain. "Trust me," said he, "you will live to leave Berlin some day without beat of drum."

† "Löscheimer über den Neuen Feuerbränden," &c.

‡ Von Cölln.

lay upon the left. The French were thus in a position to take possession of the Prussian basis of operations, which they did not fail to do. They occupied the right bank as far as Naumburg, and the defiles by Kösen, on the 13th; and therefore the Prussian army, defeated without a blow, ought not to have thought of a battle. On the 14th Rüchel was posted at Weimar, Hohenlohe between Jena and Vierzehn Heiligen, and the main body (under Brunswick) at Auerstadt." . . . "The army was an aimless multitude, whose generals had no men, whose soldiers no forage and no powder, and whose commander-in-chief did not know whether he was asleep or awake." There could not be much doubt as to the issue of the double battle of Jena and Auerstadt or Hassenhausen. It was in vain that the King was ever to be found where the danger was the greatest; * that "he led his troops into the thickest of the fire as if he sought to die the death for the Father-land; † the defeat was entire: and Prussia was annihilated.

Knowing that the army was on the brink of a battle, the result of which must be doubtful, the King, at length, gave orders for the Queen to return to Berlin. She therefore prepared to leave head-quarters at Weimar on the morning of the 14th of October, ‡ but all the horses were in demand in the field, and none could be obtained for the Queen's carriage; and she had to wait for some time whilst General Rüchel, her enthusiastic though venerable admirer, and constant friend, had his own beasts harnessed to her carriage. The distant thunder of the cannon of Jena accompanied her departure, and though she did not know what that sound portended, yet it was with a heart oppressed by the parting with her husband on the eve of a doubtful engagement, and weighed down by a heavy foreboding of evil, that she left Weimar that morning; nevertheless, as her

* "Intelligenz Blatt zu den Neuen Neuerbrände."

† "Vertraute Briefe."

‡ The battle of Jena was fought on the anniversary of the defeat of Hochkirch.

carriage passed some of the troops on their march, she called to them with her own cheerful smile and sweet voice, "Children, fight like Prussians!" *

At the gates of the capital, the speedy messenger of evil tidings overtook Louisa, with directions that she should flee instantly to Stettin: scarcely waiting for the necessary packages to be prepared, she immediately set off with her children, for that place. Here she encountered the traitor Lombard, who was himself escaping from the popular fury which threatened his life. Her finer instinct had never allowed her to trust this man, even when the King had been wholly guided by his counsels; now, feeling that the chief agent of her country's ruin was before her, she for once acted upon her independent authority, and ordered his instant arrest.†

Hence she continued her flight towards Küstrin, stopping in order to change horses at Bärwalde; but the inhabitants actually refused to furnish them to the fugitive Queen. This insolence and unkindness on the part of Prussian subjects cut her to the heart; it was supposed that these people had been bribed by the French, who derived their intelligence of her movements from Lombard, and who were known to have made inquiry respecting her route in the neighbourhood. Obligated, therefore,

* "Löschheimer."

† It has been asserted that this arrest of Lombard was the consequence of an order from the King, given to protect him from the mob (who even here endeavoured to tear him from the hands of the soldiers). This idea arose from the fact of his being immediately afterwards set at liberty. It was said that the Cabinet order for his release ran, "that he having been arrested by the order of my wife to save him from the unjust violence of the mob," &c.; but there seems little reason to doubt that the order was given by the Queen on her own authority, and that such an arrest being illegal, he was set at liberty by the King when he heard of it. However that might have been, no doubt existed of Lombard's treachery, nor of that of his colleagues, Haugwitz and Lucchesini. Lombard was even said to have delayed for twelve days the despatches which Krüsemann was commissioned to take to St. Petersburg, to inform Alexander of the outbreak of the war.—("Vertraute Briefe.") Niebuhr wrote at the time, "A light begins to break upon us from the frightful chaos, and a view is developing itself, which one must summon one's whole strength to gaze upon: as yet Lombard only is imprisoned, but the treachery certainly was not confined to him."—See "Luise Kön. Preuss."

to proceed with her already-exhausted horses, Louisa at length arrived at Küstrin, where she was joined by her husband. Küstrin being an important post on account of its position, the King paused here to give orders that it should be placed in a posture of defence, such as might resist at least a sudden attack, and might even, if vigorously defended, hold out for some time. The Queen went with him on to the walls, whilst he was examining into the available means of resistance. "It was sad," say the "*Vertraute Briefe*," "to see her grief-bowed head, as, wrapped in a travelling-mantle, she walked up and down on the walls with the King." Thence the royal fugitives started on the 26th for Königsberg, which, at least, would afford them a refuge as long as the King was master of any portion of Prussian ground. But thither also one messenger of misfortune and disgrace fast followed another. Even before the King and Queen left Küstrin, not only were Leipzig and Wittenberg, but Berlin itself, in the enemy's hands. On the 25th Benken-endorf surrendered Spandau without firing a shot; Hohenlohe capitulated at Prenzlau on the 28th. Stettin, whose officers had sent to the King to know "what they were to do if summoned to capitulate?" surrendered the next day, as might have been expected, at the summons of a body of—light cavalry! so that Napoleon wrote to Murat, "If your hussars take fortresses, I may as well disband my engineer corps, and melt my heavy artillery!" Ingersleben, the commandant of Küstrin, who had pledged his word to the King to stand by the place to the last—with a force of from three to four thousand men, and provisions, that might have held out for months, surrendered at the summons of from three to four hundred French soldiers! Even Blücher surrendered on the 7th Nov.; and Magdeburg itself, Prussia's strongest fortress, the sorest loss of all, was given up by Kleist on the 8th. During the winter the Silesian fortresses submitted in the same manner, and there was indeed no longer a King of Prussia. Never since Prussia had been a kingdom, had her own children inflicted upon her, disgrace such

as that of the conduct of Knobelsdorf, Ingersleben, and Benkendorf, and some of the other commandants of fortresses. Thus did the first storm of adversity shake down from the branches that unwholesome fruit, the produce of the years of peace and luxury, of which Mirabeau had said that it was "rotten before it was ripe." *

Thus day by day, almost, bringing news of fresh disaster, the country in the hands of the enemy, the resources entirely exhausted, dejection and despondency sitting upon every countenance that met their gaze, the King and Queen passed those first days at Königsberg. The King would have utterly sunk under his misfortunes, had it not been for his wife, but her fortitude and courage helped to support him under every calamity. Whilst all other counsellors talked of submission to any terms the conqueror might choose to dictate, she alone said, gently, but firmly, "Resistance is our only chance." When Napoleon offered a suspension of arms, on condition that the whole of the left bank of the Weichsel should be delivered to him, whilst he offered no pledge for its restoration, it was she who, the most strongly, urged that the proposal should be rejected; misfortune to her was endurable, but not disgrace. Decided and firm now, as she had been docile and yielding in the days of their young wedded love, she was the slender but firm support which held up her husband's fainting faith and hope, and raised him nearer to the heaven to which she belonged. Von Schladen had an interview with her on the 9th of November; he describes her face, at this time, as bearing the impress of suffering. She spoke very earnestly upon the state of affairs, but still expressed her firm conviction that "only firm and steady perseverance in resistance can save us." Even hither, in the midst of her misfortunes, the odious calum-

* Of all the officers who so scandalously delivered up the fortresses committed to their charge, into the enemy's hands, only Ingersleben was condemned to death, and on him the sentence was not executed. The rest were broken only, so great was the clemency of Frederic William.

nies with which Napoleon constantly endeavoured to disfigure the character of Louisa, pursued her ; he knew that the adoration with which she was regarded, on account of the beautiful purity of her character, and the consequent devotion of the people to her cause, would prove the principal obstacles which he should have to encounter, in maintaining a perfect mastery over Prussia ; this purity therefore he assailed by the most shameless calumnies. Frau von Berg says, “ a daily paper published at Berlin (the *Telegraph*), under Napoleon’s eye, was filled with abuse and reviling of all (the King’s party), especially of the Queen. Hitherto men had regarded her as a symbol of the beautiful on earth, and dared to pass no judgment on her ; they had revered her from afar—now the fair statue of her stainless reputation was to be brought down from the sanctuary and exposed to the gaze of the curious multitude.” But even that ordeal could discover no alloy in the pure gold of Louisa’s honour, and twisted, tortured, and misrepresented, as facts might be, no credible allegation could be brought against it. The charges laid against her, however, in the ears of her own people, were some of the bitterest drops in the cup that was presented to her lips. The papers containing them were foolishly allowed to meet her eyes. Von Schladen says, that during the conversation mentioned above, she spoke with deep pain of the calumnies with which Napoleon assailed her. On the 14th she was terribly excited at the contents of one of these journals. “ Is it not enough,” said she, with the tears streaming from her eyes, “ that he should rob the King of his crown ?—must the honour of his wife also be sacrificed, because the Emperor is base enough to circulate the vilest lies about me ?” Fate, too, seemed to mock the unfortunate pair in the midst of their distresses, for in the beginning of December, the couriers who brought exaggerated intelligence of victories gained by the Russians at Pultusk and Golymin, were followed in a few days by those, who announced, that the defeat of the Prussians at Soldau had left Ney and Bernadotte at liberty to march on to

Königsberg. The Queen had been ill for some time, of low fever, brought on by anxiety; for a fortnight she had been in great danger, but was slowly recovering, when this intelligence arrived; it was necessary to remove her instantly to Memel. On a cold, dark, damp winter's day therefore, lying supported on pillows, and wrapped up in shawls and *plumaux*, in the carriage, the unfortunate Louisa was obliged to seek elsewhere the shelter which Königsberg could no longer afford. She was conveyed along the Strand road to Memel, the only town which her husband could now call his own. No wonder that that significant entry was made in her diary about this time.

“ Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Wer nie die kummervolle Nächte
Auf seinem Bette, weinend sass,
Der kennt ihr nicht, ihr himmlisch'n Mächte.” *

Ill as she was, and great as was the fatigue caused by the journey, yet no word of impatience crossed Louisa's lips; patient and thankful, with still a smile and a kind word for her attendants, she submitted with humble, unquestioning resignation to the will of Him, who she knew, “orders all things well.” The journey, contrary to all expectation, did her good, and she began fast to recover strength as the spring advanced.

The successes, doubtful as they were, gained by the Prussians at Pultusk and Golymin, had contributed, in some degree, to rouse the courage of the shattered remains of the Prussian army; those officers who were not prisoners in the hands of the French, gathered round the King, and a few small bodies of troops gradually assembled; the share which this little Prussian auxiliary took in the battle of Eylau, helped to reanimate the spirits of the nation still more; Hardenberg also had rejoined the King in Memel, and that in itself afforded

* “ Who ne'er with tears hath eaten bread,
Who never pass'd night's mournful hours,
In sitting, weeping on his bed,
—He knows ye not, ye heavenly powers.”—Goethe.

ground for hope, since his sound counsels would do what could be done, to retrieve the effects of those of his predecessors. Less unfavourable reports, too, arrived from Berlin, that instead of basely crouching to flatter the conqueror, as had been reported, the inhabitants were merely silent and submissive, from constraint; so that the aspect of affairs was not altogether so desperate as it had seemed a short time back. Action, too, is always a remedy against despondency; when, therefore, Frederic William and the Emperor Alexander met to form a new alliance, and to plan the operations for the campaign of 1807, a brighter glow seemed for a moment to tinge the face of Prussian affairs. Napoleon, too, when he heard of the meeting of the two monarchs, sent Bertrand to make propositions of peace to Frederic William, and if he would have deserted his ally, he might have obtained it on favourable terms; but he was by far too honourable to listen to separate terms of accommodation, therefore he and the Emperor Alexander concluded the treaty of Bartenstein. Ominously enough, as Förster remarks, that meeting, when Alexander protested so fervently to Frederic William, "Neither of us will fall alone—we stand or we fall *together*," took place on "All Fools' Day," April 1, 1807, but the alliance furnished comfort and hope at the time, and the issue of the campaign could not be foreseen.*

* How little experience had been gained by either monarch from the past, may be judged from the fact, that although the allied armies were suffering from the want of the commonest necessities of life, during their presence in the encampment, neither Alexander nor Frederic William had the slightest idea of the existence of even a scarcity of provisions. When they together inspected the troops, and to Frederic William's question, "Kinder, habt ihr alles!" the loud reply of "Hunger!" from all the men was taken by both sovereigns for the "Hurrah," of perfect satisfaction, and they rode off the ground perfectly satisfied with the state of their army! Some of the men making sport of their misfortunes, had set up a board of warning to trespassers, which they had found, with the notice in large letters, "Hier wird Elend gehegt," in front of their huts. I translate the pun for the sake of those who do not understand German. *Elend* is the German name of the Elk, it also means misery, therefore the inscription which, where it originally stood, meant "Elk preserved here," in its new position read, "misery harboured here."—See Förster, "Sech's Jahre."

Whilst her husband was occupied in the field, the Queen, who had returned to Königsberg, was employing herself in the education of her children, whom she now made, more than ever, her own charge. The crown Prince was at this time twelve years of age; his mind was one of great promise, and already he could comprehend the misfortunes of his parents and his country. It had always been his mother's earnest endeavour to implant in his mind such sentiments as might befit the heir to the throne of her beloved country. Now also she sought to call up in his young heart an echo to the fervent patriotism that animated her own. "You see me weep," said she to him after the battle of Jena; "I weep for the downfall of my house and the loss of its glory. Recall these unhappy hours to your memory when I am no more, and weep for me then, such tears as I weep now over the ruin of my country; but do not satisfy yourself with tears—act—develope your strength! Perhaps you may be destined to free your people from the shame with which it is overwhelmed. Do not let yourself be carried away by the degeneracy of the age; be a man! court the fame of a general and a hero. If you cannot raise your fallen country by your efforts, then seek death as Prince Louis has done!"

Whilst at Königsberg she had become acquainted with several men of literary talent. One of her favourite acquaintances was Scheffner, still juvenile in his old age, who, when a young man, had volunteered into Frederic II.'s army, instead of remaining at his desk; and who, on afterwards applying for a pension, had been wounded by that monarch's reply, that "he had so many brave officers who were unpensioned, that he could not pension a mere *Kriegsrath*."

Scheffner was admitted on the most friendly terms to the Queen's society at the house of her sister Frederica (now Princess of Solms). He describes both the sisters; the Princess of Solms as possessing a very charming person, a very fascinating manner, and a spice of coquetry, aided by the tones of a

very musical voice. His conversation with her ranged, he says, from the "cedar to the hyssop" of State affairs. Of the Queen he speaks, like all who described her, in the more subdued tone of reverence—"Eyes of a franker, purer expression; a more entire, almost child-like ingenuousness, have I never seen in any female face; yet was she still more lovely in mind than body." After the friendly reception which she had accorded him, he felt at liberty to speak without reserve upon several subjects on which her conduct had been called in question; but her answers were so simply straightforward, that no vestige of doubt could rest upon the point, in the mind of any unprejudiced person. The many pleasant hours of reading or conversation passed with this lively and kindly old man were a great solace to the Queen. These conversations seem to have taken as wide a range as those with the Princess of Solms, though not on the same topics, for they turned upon "Court life," on "Eternal life," on "Education," and the differences between "princely and private education," on the "Virtue of hospitality," on the "Necessity of court etiquette," &c. &c.; but if the subject of politics was touched upon, she immediately broke off from it, and started some other topic. "But on all these themes," says Scheffner, "that which was beautiful and good made the strongest impression upon her." With Scheffner she read Süvern's "Lectures on History," upon which she made her own annotations, and forwarded them to him for his corrections, and his opinion on the various subjects which had struck her. In one of her letters she entreats him, when he visits her, to "come in boots, not in thin silk stockings. You have no compassion on old age, but I love it; therefore I must contribute all that I can to keep you in health." In this note she begs him to look out the lecture in question, and, "for the love of her," to put the dates to the periods of the rise, prime, and decline of the Greek and Roman Powers, and, above all, to date the rise of "beloved Germany." But

the subject of the crown Prince's education was that which was most frequently discussed by his anxious mother and her old friend, that subject being one of so much importance not only to her darling son, but also to the nation.*

With Bishop Borrowsky also, whose piety was an aid to her own, the Queen held frequent intercourse at Königsberg. Once on his visiting her, she rose at his entrance, saying, with that poetical turn of expression which so often characterized her diction when she spoke of any subject that excited her higher feelings, and in accordance with which her sweet voice always modulated itself so singularly,—"I have been reading that precious 126th Psalm, on which we spoke together when you were last here. Amidst all the sorrow it expresses, the conquering hope rises like the morning dawn, and through the storm of misfortune one hears the glad song of the victor. There is in it a spirit of sadness, and yet of triumph; of resignation, yet of glad confidence; it is a *Hallelujah in tears*." There were dark hours in that "Passions-Zeit" (the years between 1806 and 1809), says this confidential friend, when the King was overwhelmed and hopeless and the Queen in tears, and when from her trembling lips broke the words "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" but such moments passed away in the once more unclouded brightness of the inward light of faith, and the King, though conquered, and, as it were, a prisoner in that last poor remnant of his dominions, still happy in his domestic ties, surrounded by that atmosphere of love in which Louisa ever moved, was quiet but cheerful, his port as erect, and his step as free as when he walked in Berlin, the monarch of Prussia. Eylert was right when he applied to Louisa that description of a wife which is contained in the last chapter of Proverbs,—she did "do him good and not evil all the

* Scheffner was ill on the Queen's return to Berlin, so that she could not see him; she sent him kind messages, however, by von Schrötter, who writes, "I am to greet you from one of the fairest women of womankind, from one who is neither more nor less than the queen of women—the Queen herself."

days of her life ;” and in return, “his heart trusted in her, so that he had no need of spoil.”*

Von Cölln writes from Königsberg, 17th of May, 1807,—“The Queen leads a most retired life ; the exercise of benevolence and humanity fills up her days. She seeks, so far as her sex permits, to alleviate the miseries occasioned by war. She provides with incessant efforts, and with considerable contributions, for the wounded and the needy. She visits no theatres, gives no concerts nor balls ; but every one who, like myself, has the pleasure of approaching her, must acknowledge that she, or else no woman upon earth, realises the high ideal of fairest womanhood. Not striking, but softly magical, is the impression which she makes on all, of all ranks, foreigners and countrymen. The calm, the resignation, with which she bears her misfortunes deeply touches the heart ; and it must, indeed, be the extreme of vileness which, having beheld her mild, heavenly look, can revile this model of her sex. Terrible is always the power of misfortune ; still more terrible when it strikes a sovereign ; but most so when it strikes one who not only *is*, but deserves to be a sovereign. And truly this is the case with Louisa. Born in a hut, she would still have been a Queen ; and were she not a Queen, still every feeling heart must do homage to her.”

Two days before the date of this letter, May 15, 1807, Louisa writes to her father from Königsberg in a tone of cheerfulness and hope, as to the results of the alliance with Russia, communicating also intelligence of the departure of “the excellent Blücher” for Pomerania, of the movements of troops, of the revival of patriotism, and of her conviction that “all will yet go well, and we shall yet be happy.” She mentions also the siege of Dantzic, and the bravery with which the garrison was holding out, the inhabitants furnishing the men with provisions, and all willing sooner to be buried

* Eylert, “Charakterzüge aus dem Leben Friedrich Wilhelms III.,” vol. ii. He begins his Life of the Queen by quoting this chapter.

under the ruins than surrender. "It is the same with Colberg* and Graudenz; would that it had been thus with other fortresses. But enough of such evils; let us turn our eyes to God, who never forsakes us, even when we forsake Him. The King is with the Emperor Alexander, with the army. He will remain there as long as the Emperor does. This glorious union, founded on unshakable steadfastness, gives the fairest hopes of permanence. Through perseverance we shall conquer; of that I am convinced." But, alas for the delusiveness of human hopes! when she wrote again to her father, little more than a month afterwards,† Dantzic had fallen; Louisa had again

* Colberg, a small and hitherto neglected fortress, had been noticed by Schill, a young Prussian officer of the Queen's Regiment, a member of the "Tugendbund," as affording admirable facilities for the landing of Russian troops by sea; after the Prussian misfortunes he established himself there, and with a handful of followers "with no saddles to their horses, and their swords belted on by a rope," kept up a *guerilla* warfare upon the enemy. Colberg, owing to the fame acquired by Schill, had to undergo a siege; Schill was treacherously imprisoned by the governor of the place, but a citizen named Nettlebeck then took the command, and held out long and bravely.

† "Memel, June 17, 1807.—A new and terrible affliction has come upon us, and we are on the point of leaving the kingdom. Imagine my feelings on the occasion. Yet I entreat you, for God's sake, do not mistake your daughter, do not believe that cowardice thus bows my head. I have two convictions which raise me above everything; the first is the thought that we are no sport of blind chance, but that we are in God's hand, and that Providence guides us; the second, that we fall with honour. The King has proved—to the whole world has he proved it—that he deserves not shame, but honour. Prussia will never voluntarily submit to slavish fetters. Not in a single step could the King have acted otherwise, without proving unfaithful to his own character, and a traitor to his people. How strengthening these reflections are, they alone can know who are penetrated by truly honourable feelings. But to the subject. In consequence of the unfortunate battle of Friedland, Königsberg has fallen into French hands. We are pressed by the enemy, and if the danger approaches yet nearer, I shall be under the necessity of leaving Memel with my children. The King will again unite himself with the Emperor. I shall go so soon as the danger becomes imminent to Riga. God will help me to support the moment when I must pass the boundaries of the kingdom. It will require strength, but I direct my eyes to Heaven, from whence comes all, both of good and of evil; and my firm belief is that He will not send us more than we can bear.

"Yet, once again, best of fathers, we fall with honour, respected by other nations; and we shall ever have friends, because we deserve them. I cannot tell you how tranquillising is this thought. I bear all with that calmness and resigna-

been obliged to seek shelter in Memel; Königsberg was in the hands of the French; the battle of Friedland had quenched all hopes from the alliance; and the Emperor Alexander, despite the vows of eternal friendship and alliance of "All Fools' Day, 1807," had agreed on a suspension of hostilities, apart from Prussia, and was about on the very next day after the date of the last part of that letter, to meet Napoleon on the Niemen, and to lavish upon him embraces and enthusiastic professions of friendship, such as had so short a time before assured the trustful King of Prussia, when he had it in his power to make a separate peace with Napoleon, that they would "stand or fall together." And now, what indignities were to be heaped upon the head of the unfortunate Prince! The French Emperor was solicited to allow Alexander's *protégé*,

tion which only peace of conscience and a well-grounded hope can give. If God give peace to the breast of the good man, he will ever have cause for joy. Still one thing more for your comfort; that nothing will ever take place on our side which is not consonant with the strictest honour, and which does not agree with the whole course of our conduct. That I know will comfort you, as well as all who belong to me.

"I am ever your true, obedient, deeply-affectionate daughter, and, thank God that your goodness allows me to say it, your friend, "LOUISA."

"June 24.—My letters are still here, because not only wind, but storms, make all egress of shipping impossible. I now send you a safe messenger, and therefore continue to give you news from hence. The army has been necessitated to retire by degrees, and an armistice for four weeks has been concluded by the Russians. The sky often clears up when one expects bad weather; it may be so here. No one can wish it as I do; still wishes are but wishes, and must not be built upon. Yet all comes from Thee, Father of Goodness! My faith shall not waver, yet I *can hope no more*. I appeal with respect to that to my letter, it is written from the depths of my soul. You know me wholly when you have read it, dear father. On the path of right to live, to die, or if so it must be, to live upon bread and salt, never shall I be wholly unhappy, yet I can hope no more. One who has been thus thrust down from his heaven can hope no more. Come good—oh! no one can receive it more thankfully than I, but I no longer expect it; come evil—it may for a moment bewilder me, but it can never crush me so long as it is not deserved. Wrong alone on our side would bring me to the grave, but we stand high and firm in the right. You see, best of fathers, the enemy of mankind cannot prevail against me. The King has been with the Emperor since the 19th; yesterday they went to Taganrog, only a few miles from Tilsit, where the French Emperor is."

the kingdomless Frederic William, to appear in his august presence; and when admitted to that honour, the successor of Frederic the Great, in his plain, soldier-like attire, was favoured by no return of his salutation to the Emperor, save that conveyed by Napoleon's haughty question to the gentlemen ushers, whether they were not aware that the military shako and moustache were not parts of the prescribed dress in which it was customary for the *parvenu* "citoyen de la république," to receive those who were admitted to an audience. But, alas! that this should not have been the crowning insult which Prussia's royalty was destined to receive at the hands of Napoleon. Alas! that that pure, fair Princess, who shared it, should have been called upon by the great love that she bore her country, to sacrifice herself, by stooping to propitiate the conqueror,—and to sacrifice herself in vain!

When, after that famous meeting upon the raft on the Niemen, at which the preliminaries of peace were so speedily settled, by almost the first words of Alexander, "I hate the English as much as you do," and the reply of Napoleon, "If so, peace is concluded," the King of Prussia was summoned to take part in the conferences of the two Emperors, his position was a most painful and humiliating one; uncertain of the friendship of Alexander, and all but insulted by Napoleon; unable, for the sake of his country, to resent the treatment he received, yet galled to the very soul by its insolence, although he never forgot his self-respect, never lost his quiet dignity of manner and bearing, yet the burden was almost greater than he could bear. Lefebvre says, "The King of Prussia was present at the interviews of the two Emperors, as a troublesome and unhappy witness. In his presence, both laid a restriction upon their communications, and waited his departure to give utterance to the secret feelings of their hearts. Napoleon felt an invincible ill-will towards the King, and was imprudent enough to let it appear. Frederic William's reserve was increased by the difficulty of his position, be-

tween an irreconcilable enemy and a friend to whom he felt himself to be burdensome. He was wholly dejected; every feature of his face, every word, his whole manner showed it." He sent Schladen to remind the Russian minister of the articles of the treaty of Bartenstein; but Budberg could only tell him that the Emperors meant to negotiate the treaty personally, and that Napoleon had said to Alexander, "If you will be my secretary, I will be yours; if you concede me a finger's length, I will give you the length of an arm." Alexander even allowed Napoleon to utter coarse jokes upon his unhappy ally in his presence, without remonstrance. "Alas!" wrote Schladen, "the autocrat of Russia plays before Napoleon a part but little becoming his dignity, he seems to be engrossed by the idea of winning him by means of flattery."* "This Alexander," says another writer, "is born for Prussia's misfortune. In the year 1805 he sounds the tocsin, before all is prepared for war; he declares war with presumption; with presumption bursts into Moravia, despite Austria's displeasure; retires with pusillanimity after he has received his lesson; disbands his troops without foreseeing the approaching outbreak of war. His assistance to us in 1806-7 was as destructive to us as the attack of the enemy; and he ends by helping to plunder his ally. I ask, if Alexander had been Prussia's bitterest enemy, could he have acted in a manner more calculated to accelerate our downfall, than he has done whilst he called himself our friend?"†

In order to deprive Frederic William of his last friend, and Prussia of her last support, Napoleon once more haughtily declined to treat with Hardenberg. Frederic William tried to temporize, but the refusal was repeated in stronger terms; there was no help for it, Hardenberg must be sacrificed. When Napoleon told Alexander that there should no longer be a "King of Prussia, scarcely a Margrave of Brandenburg," the latter's conscience, hitherto so sluggish with regard to his ally,

* See Förster, "Sechs Jahre."

† See Förster, Letter from Gneisenau to Stein, 1809.

took the alarm, and he began to exert himself in earnest, but in vain, on behalf of Frederic William. As a last resource, he bethought himself to try the power of the Queen's beauty of person, and fascination of manner upon Napoleon. With this view, he desired Kalkreuth to convey to her an invitation to come to Tilsit, sanguinely promising the happiest results from her compliance. It was a heavy sacrifice to demand of a Queen and a woman, that she should lay aside, at least apparently, her resentment against the man who had not only driven her husband from his throne, but had also cast the vilest aspersions upon her own honour,—and should stoop to approach him as a suppliant. No woman of less nobility of mind *could* have done it, no woman of less purity of character would have done it. The sacrifice was demanded on behalf of husband and country—she agreed to make it. There was an entry made in that silent recipient of her secret feelings, her diary at that time. “What struggles it has cost me God only knows, for if I do not hate the man, I look upon him as the one who has caused the misfortune of the King and of the country. However much I may admire his talents, I cannot admire his deceitful character. It will cost me much to be courteous to him, but the hardship is required of me, and I am used to make sacrifices.” Those whose judgment was coolest and clearest foresaw that the sacrifice would be useless, and dissuaded her from going; but with the brilliant hopes and confident assurances of the Russian Emperor still ringing in her ears, she felt that, even if it proved a failure, the effort must be made. Napoleon, on his side, looked forward with some little hesitation to the proposed visit; he had heard so much of the fascination of the Queen of Prussia, that he almost feared to expose himself to its influence. He delayed the interview, therefore, until the treaty could be completed within twenty-four hours, and then an appointment was made for Queen Louisa to dine with the two Emperors at Tilsit. Rooms were prepared for her reception at that place, and she repaired thither on the 5th July. Napoleon paid her the first

visit, the King received him at the door. He saluted with his riding whip, and ascended the stairs to her apartments. "Sire," said she, as she greeted him, "I am sorry you have had the trouble of ascending such inconvenient steps to visit me," and to Napoleon's commonplace "With such an object one could surmount anything," she rejoined, in a low voice, "For those whom Heaven favours, earth presents no obstacles." "Your Majesty should have thought of that sooner," said Napoleon, "why did you, of all others, make war upon me?" In a tremulous voice, Louisa replied, "Prussia deceived herself as to her strength. She ventured to make war upon the hero of his century, to oppose the Destiny of France and neglect her friendship, it is true, but it is hard to be so punished for it;" and then with that most moving of all eloquence, the pleading of the heart—she conjured him to prove himself a hero, in the best sense of the word, by showing magnanimity to a vanquished foe, not to drive a defeated enemy to despair, and "Oh! at least to give back Magdeburg," whose loss had cost her so much pain, that she afterwards said the name would be found written on her heart after her death. Napoleon was somewhat shaken, but Talleyrand, like an evil genius, was at hand to whisper, as he saw the signs of softness come over his master's face, "Shall posterity say Napoleon sacrificed his greatest conquest to a pretty woman?" At dinner Louisa was seated between the two Emperors; Napoleon treated her with the greatest deference, and no opportunity did she allow to slip which could bring in a word for Prussia. Her husband, seated on Napoleon's left hand, and feeling all the sacrifice that she was making for his sake, was even more dejected than usual; he spoke of the pain of losing hereditary provinces—"Such losses are common in the chances of war," said the Emperor. "Your Majesty can afford to make light of it," replied the King, somewhat hastily; "you do not know what it is to lose provinces which have descended to you, and which you can forget as little as your cradle." "The camp should be the

cradle ; a man has no time to think about such things," said Napoleon. At the conclusion of the repast he plucked a rose from a tree which stood at the window, and presented it to the Queen. "I accept it," said she, "but not without Magdeburg." Napoleon answered, roughly, "I must observe to your Majesty that it is I who give, and you who receive the gift." "There is no rose without thorns, but none with such thorns as this," said the Queen, sadly. The conversation then became more general, and Louisa dared venture on no more entreaties for Prussia. Nevertheless, Schladen's diary says—"7th July : The Queen returned * from Tilsit to-day, filled with the sweetest hopes ; many shared in these hopes, that through the frightful humiliation of the unfortunate Queen, the proud conqueror would grant her petition. After dinner . . . we were all cheerful and happy, when Count Goltz appeared, and informed the King that he had had an audience with Napoleon, in which the latter had informed him harshly, that all he had said to the Queen had been mere courtly phrases, which bound him to nothing ; that he was firmly resolved to give the King the Elbe as his boundary ; that there was no further room for negotiation, for that he had already definitively settled the treaty with the Emperor of Russia ; and that Frederic William had to thank that Prince's chivalrous adherence to his ally for the terms he had received, since, without his interference, Jerome Buonaparte would have been King of Prussia, and the present royal family expelled, for, under the circumstances, it was a mere matter of courtesy to leave the King any part of his territories ; and, finally, after a long-winded declamation, crowded with invective and accusation, Napoleon sent Graf Goltz to Talleyrand, who took from his *portefeuille* several sheets of paper which contained the articles of the treaty, read them to him, but scarcely allowed the plenipotentiary to see them himself, and informed him that no further concessions were to be expected, and that, Napoleon being anxious to return to Paris as soon as possible, the treaty must be completed by the next day." †

* To the King's quarters at Piktüppohnen.

† See Förster, "Sechs Jahre."

Alexander having observed the effect temporarily produced upon Napoleon by the Queen's presence, resolved once more to try that means of even yet obtaining better terms for Prussia : he accordingly again invited the Queen to Tilsit, and again, in the hope of better success, she accepted the invitation. Napoleon was more courteous than on the last interview, for the treaty was now completed, and he had nothing to fear on the score of compliance. When the Queen proposed to take leave, Napoleon offered her his arm ; he stopped upon the stairs, and she, making one last despairing effort for her country, seized his hand, and pressing it convulsively said, in a voice of mingled bitterness and pain, "Is it possible, that after I have had the satisfaction of approaching the man of the age, and of the world's history, he will not grant me the privilege and the happiness, of being able to assure him that he has won me for my whole life?" "Madam," replied Napoleon, drily, "I am to be pitied, it is the influence of my evil star." At those words, Alexander, who had leaned forward eagerly, drew back : the unfortunate Louisa threw herself, sobbing, into her carriage, overwhelmed by the full sense of the bitter and useless degradation to which she had submitted, and, pointing to Napoleon's dwelling, she exclaimed, "That is a house where I have been fearfully deceived."*

Napoleon himself afterwards, when speaking of this interview, acknowledged not only that the "Queen of Prussia was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen," † but also that, "in spite of his address and utmost efforts, she constantly led the conversation, returned at pleasure to her subject, and directed it as she chose, but still with so much tact and delicacy, that it was impossible to take offence. And in truth it must be confessed that the objects were of infinite importance, the time short and precious." ‡ Even in this, the greatest personal

* See Förster.

† See Duchesse d'Abrantes' "Memoirs."

‡ Alison's "History of Europe." Napoleon still maintained, even at St. Helena, that the Queen of Prussia was the virtual sovereign of Prussia. "She virtually governed Prussia during fifteen years," said he.

sacrifice which Louisa had been called upon to make, she did not escape the voice of slander from the partisans of Napoleon, but these accusations seem either not to have reached her, or, if they did, to have fallen unheeded upon the calm integrity of her own conscience.

The peace was finally concluded, and signed on the 9th of July, 1807, at midnight. The Queen writes, "Peace is signed, but at what a painful price! Our boundaries for the future are only to extend to the Elbe. Nevertheless the King is greater than his opponent. He could have made an advantageous peace after Eylau, but he would not voluntarily treat with the *evil principle*, or ally himself with him; now, constrained by necessity, he has negotiated, but does not ally himself. This will bring Prussia a blessing some day. At Eylau, too, he must have forsaken a true ally, and that he would not do. The King's acting thus will bring success to Prussia, that is my firm belief."

The King and Queen now returned to Memel, followed by the loving sympathy of the whole nation; the misfortunes of the royal couple acted as an appeal to the patriotism of the people, and every heart responded to it warmly. When Frederic William took leave, by letter, of the subjects of his lost provinces, a general burst of affection and regret was the response. The King and Queen were especially touched by one letter from Lower Westphalia, in the old Platt-Deutsch mother tongue. "Our hearts were nigh to break," ran this letter, "when we read thy farewell to us; we could not persuade ourselves that we should cease to be thy true subjects, we who loved thee always so much. As true as we live, it is not thy fault that thy generals were too bewildered and confused to lead the disordered troops to us, and to have called us and our ploughmen to a new battle; we would have risked body and life upon it, and would certainly have saved the country," &c. Von Cölln writes at this time, "My feelings urge me to Memel; Frederic William, born to the throne, and the father of his people, is now banished to the furthest ex-

tremity of his dominions, into a country town, where, in a simple private house, nothing but his own virtues, and the loving attentions of his wife can comfort him, and preserve him from despair." "If ever a king deserved the sympathy of posterity, it is Frederic William; if ever a Queen deserved respect, admiration, love, adoration, it is Louisa, the unfortunate Queen of Prussia. She, with every claim upon a glittering throne, who had for ten years enjoyed it, who was always a mother to the land, who in time of war showed herself a truly heroic woman, who with torn heart and suffering frame underwent all its hardships, and who at least compelled the respect of Napoleon, now lives in Memel, in the bosom of her family, employed with womanly work, her conscience comforting her for the past, and giving her hopes for the future. And all this we see, we who call ourselves Prussians, see it with patience, and do not foam and gnash our teeth with rage; we do not tear to pieces the wretches who caused all this misfortune; nay, some of us are even shameless enough to revile the unfortunate King." Frederic William and Louisa were indeed compelled to adopt all the simplicity of private individuals in their manner of life at Memel; the enormous demands* of Napoleon could in no way be met by Prussia in her reduced and impoverished state; every possible expedient was had recourse to to procure the money, as of course so long as it remained a debt, Napoleon would have an excuse for maintaining French garrisons in the Prussian fortresses. The King and Queen made every imaginable personal sacrifice; even the golden table service of Frederic the Great was melted down; Frederic William was obliged to borrow; and to accept the contributions which some of his subjects sent in, as presents, † to

* Prussia had lost at least half, both of her territories and her population, and upon the remaining portion, already exhausted by the war, Napoleon, in the interval between 1806 and 1808, levied the enormous sum of upwards of twenty-four million pounds sterling.—See Alison's "History of Europe."

† The Mennonites sent one of their body to the King, to present to him the

meet the expenses of his household, and even then, many a citizen of Memel kept a better table than the King and Queen of Prussia.*

Thus, hemmed in on every side, sorely tried and tempted, sometimes when "the deep waters came in, even unto his soul," dark doubts of the overruling providence of God would, for a time, overcloud the serenity of Frederic William's faith. Bishop Borrowsky was his chief counsellor and support in these seasons of peculiar trial. "He proves to me," said the King, "both out of the Holy Scriptures and out of profane history, that God's ways are often dark and mysterious, but always holy and salutary, so that, at last, all Wrong destroys itself, and all Right conquers. States and their rulers often need refining, that the dross accumulated by prosperity may be burnt away again. He who is not improved by misfortune is incapable of improvement. We must be patient and believing, and firm in adversity; we must wait, and not prescribe time and measure and purpose to God. He will come and help us if we are found worthy to be helped." Which was the truest philosopher, Frederic II., or Frederic William III.?—when both apparently ruined, the one talked of poison, but did not take it, and contented himself with writing obscene verses instead—the other

sum of 3000 Louis d'or which had been subscribed amongst them; the messenger was accompanied by his wife, who brought the Queen a basket of fresh butter. Frederic William and Louisa were gratified and touched by the simplicity with which these offerings were made; the King accepted the Louis d'or, and the Queen took a shawl from her shoulders, and, with tears in her eyes, presented it to the good woman as a remembrance. The Mennonites are a sect who devote themselves to the rearing of cattle and other agricultural pursuits; they "abhor war, and keep themselves clear of the world, in order to fit themselves for heaven."—*See Eylert.*

* The strict economy and self-denial of the King and Queen of Prussia at this season of pressure, presents a striking contrast to the conduct of the French emigrants in Prussia at the time of the Revolution; for, although the funds upon which the latter subsisted were almost wholly contributions from foreign sources, the most wasteful extravagance prevailed at their quarters; thus, for instance, we hear of these luxurious exiles having "hams steeped in Burgundy;" "pounds of butter thrown upon the fire to make it burn;" "only the best parts of fowls sent to table;" "baths of the juices of meat and wine," &c. &c.—*Ibid.*

said, "let us be patient and steady, and wait, and God will come and help us."

And help came soon, even by means of Napoleon himself, who, when he declined to treat with Hardenberg, suggested that Stein should be recalled. Stein—the "Eck and Grund and Edel-Stein" * of the Prussian state—was accordingly summoned, and the administration of the interior, in his skilful hands, soon began to show a tendency towards recovery. Stein had been already employed in the ministry in the year 1806, and had accompanied the King to Königsberg, but his pride rebelled at the interference of the privy councillor Beyme in his department, and in consequence of the differences of the two ministers, Stein had received his dismissal 3rd Jan., 1807, couched in terms of extreme harshness and injustice. The tone of this document, which styled Stein a "factious, contumelious, self-willed, and disobedient minister, who, proud of his own genius and talent, far from setting the good of the State before his eyes, is guided by caprice, and acts from personal hatred and revenge," rendered it highly doubtful whether he would listen to the recall. The Queen had vainly endeavoured to reconcile him with Beyme; in the beginning of the year she wrote to Stein, and even, in order to make the appeal stronger, did so in their common mother-tongue, instead of the French, in which her education had made it her custom to write †—"Ich

* Corner and foundation and precious stone. Stein's name furnished innumerable puns at the time: he was "turned into stone" at the exorbitant demands of Napoleon; he was the Emperor's "Stone of stumbling;" and he and the French Pro-consul at Berlin, *Pierre Daru* ("the monster Daru" Stein called him), were "Stone against Stone." It is curious that Stein, Hardenberg and Scharnhorst, the three best ministers of Prussia in these troublous times, were neither of them Prussians.

† She always regretted that the German language, as was then customary, had been so much neglected in her education, that, although she greatly admired its nervous strength and its copiousness, and rejoiced at the success of its cultivation by the great authors of the day, she never could herself acquire the habit of writing it with ease, and its orthography always presented an insuperable obstacle to her efforts. She once sent a memoir, which she had compiled in German, to Stein, begging him to correct it. "Streichen Sie, Setzen Sie zu nach Belieben, ich werde

beschwöre Sie, haben Sie nur Geduldt mit den ersten Monathen, Der König hält gewiss seyn Wort. Beyme kömmt weg aber erst in Berlin : solange geben Sie nach. Dass um Gottes-willen die Güte nicht um drei Monath Gedult und Zeit über den Hauffen fallen. Ich beschwöre Sie um König, Vaterland, meine kinder und mein selbst-willen, darum Gedult.—LOUISE.”*

She now tried every means of inducing him to forgive the past, and to take upon himself once more the care of the government. Hardenberg, upon his own retirement, had been commissioned by the King to write and offer Stein the office of Minister of the Interior. The Queen now begged others, whom she knew to have influence with him, to use their utmost endeavours to induce him to return. The Princess Louisa Radizwill, with whom as well as with her brother, Prince Louis, he had always been on terms of peculiar friendship, wrote earnestly to him (10th July, 1807): “The King,” said she, “at this moment deserves our whole sympathy, for his courage and firmness have not been shaken throughout our last misfortunes ; he has shown himself ready to make any sacrifices, and impressed with the idea that it is better to fall nobly than to survive disgrace. Towards you, my dear Stein, all our eyes are simultaneously directed in this emergency. You will surely be so magnanimous as to forget all which removed you from us.” Frau von Berg, also the mutual friend of the Queen and of Stein, wrote beseeching him, by the Queen’s virtues as a wife and a mother, to be her support, and the security of the King, against men, who were dangerous both to his honour and to the welfare of the state. But Stein was too magnanimous to need even the

sehr dankbar seyn. Renvoyez la moi bientôt et ne riez pas des fautes d’orthographe, mais c’est plus fort que moi, et je m’en facherai toute ma vie sans y remédier comme il faut.”

* “I conjure you, only have patience for the first few months. The King will certainly keep his word. Beyme will be dismissed, however, in Berlin. Give way for so long—for God’s sake do not let the good cause be shipwrecked for the sake of three months’ patience. I conjure you, therefore, for the sake of King, country, my children and myself—patience. Louise.”

appeals of friendship to call him to what he felt to be his duty towards the country ; although ill in bed at the time, he made neither excuse nor delay, but accepted the office unconditionally, and hastened, as soon as possible, to present himself to the King. And terribly in need of him were both King and country before he arrived ; for the conditions for the evacuation of the fortresses were not fulfilled, and the constant fresh demands from the French filled all hearts with despair ; whilst the Prussian envoy at Paris was treated with the utmost disregard by Napoleon and his Cabinet. The Queen writes, Sept., 1807 :— “ It is incredible what we have to submit to ; yesterday we received intelligence from Knobelsdorf, at Paris, where he is treated like a lackey ; it is impossible for him to place his proposals before Napoleon, for he has only been admitted to him once, and then as it were by chance ; the Prince of Baden and Cambacères were in the room. Napoleon treated him with the greatest contempt. The conduct of Napoleon’s circle is of the same stamp. Champagny (the French Minister for Foreign Affairs) said to Knobelsdorf, ‘ We shall see how Prussia conducts herself ; it is to be hoped she will be pretty submissive to the Emperor’s will ;’ he also said, that ‘ all the fault lay with us and our bad disposition ; that the proceedings of France towards us, for the future, will be regulated by our own conduct.’ Now, also, a portion of Silesia is torn from us, which, at the conclusion of peace, was expressly preserved to us under the title of New Silesia ; and when Knobelsdorf remonstrated, Champagny said it was a slip of the pen—an error ! Say if that be not enough to justify despair. Alas ! my God, why hast Thou forsaken us ? Where is Stein ? he is my last comfort. Great of heart, of comprehensive mind, he may know some outlet which lies hid from us.”

“ Stein is coming,” wrote the Queen again, shortly before his arrival, “ and with him a little light dawns upon me. Yet there is no future without independence. Marshal Soult is a terrible man, and if he goes on thus he will hold us prisoners in Memel

for years, for he does what he chooses, and is well matured in the school in which he has been brought up." Stein, the long sighed for, the Hercules of reform who was to "cleanse the Augean stables of the Prussian internal administration," * came at last, and with him came a gleam of hope into the hearts of all. The Queen writes once more, "Thank God that Stein is here; that is a proof that God has not forsaken us." Stein, of whom so much has been said and written, and of whose character so many dissentient views have been given, yet of whom all agreed that he was the man for the time, was a minister of great and commanding talent; his disposition was hasty † and irritable; he was rough in his exterior; "his countenance presents two worlds," says Arndt; ‡ "on the upper part rule the stormless gods, but mortals have their dwelling on the lower part; there reign anger, scorn, and the impulse of passion—Olympus smiles above while the storms rage below." Niebuhr accuses Stein of partiality, and of showing favour to unworthy characters; nevertheless, despite all the faults with which he was charged, decided, energetic, possessed of vast funds of information, from English travel and other sources, lucid in judgment, sharp and laconic in speech, "his integrity without spot, his activity without bounds," "if any one could reorganize the state Stein was the man to do it;" § if he did occasionally take bad measures, at least he carried them through; there was no vacillation in his mind, and therefore none in his actions; and, above all, "with rarely-liberal views Stein combined a conscientiousness

* Scheffner.

† One of his servants having inadvertently scattered the contents of the ink-stand, instead of the sand-box, over a writing which Stein had just signed, the latter, in the impetuous anger of the moment, seized the paper and rubbed it violently in the man's face; but his anger soon subsided on such occasions, and he was anxious to repair his hasty actions: he gave the servant a paper with a double Louis d'or in it the next time he saw him.—*Vehse*.

‡ See Pertz's "Leben des Freiherrn Stein von Altenstein."

§ Von Cölln.

equally rare.”* Fortunate, indeed, it was, that a man so singularly qualified to take the helm at that moment, should have been found to do so, for a task of enormous difficulty lay before him. Shortly after his return to office the Queen writes, “*Stein ist zum erstemal in Stein verwandelt*, at the last claim, or rather order, for a contribution of one hundred and fifty millions, one-third to be paid in ready money; the rest, half in promissory notes, the other half from the sale of domains; and in order to be certain that the terms of payment are complied with, the French demand five fortresses as pledges of it, Graudenz and Colberg, which both defended themselves so bravely against the enemy, Stettin, Küstrin, and Glogau; these are to be garrisoned with forty thousand French troops; the King is required to clothe, arm, and feed them, and to give for that purpose twelve million Thalers; the domains of the Mark and Magdeburg, between the Oder and Elbe, and in Pomerania, to be given up to Napoleon to be governed, or disposed of, if he chooses, instead of the other fifty millions. Certainly forty thousand men cannot find room in the fortresses, consequently land must be provided for them, or rather they will take it themselves, and then what remains for us? This is our frightful position; every one here is in despair. My strength, too, forsakes me now; it is frightful, terrible, hard, especially since it is undeserved. My future is of the gloomiest. If we only keep Berlin—but sometimes the thought weighs on my boding heart that that too will be taken from us, and made the capital of another kingdom; then I should have only one wish, to emigrate far away, to live as private people, and, if possible—forget. Oh, God! what is to become of Prussia; forsaken by weakness, persecuted by arrogance, enfeebled by misfortune, we *must* perish utterly. Ruin is inevitable. Savary, the French ambassador in St. Petersburg, has declared that the Austrian mediation will have no effect, and has sent us the kind

* Vehse.

advice to sell our jewels and valuables—to dare to say this to us ! ” *

This was, indeed, the “Passion-time” of Prussia and of Prussia’s Queen. Already had the hot sun begun to dry up the bright dewdrops from the flower-garden of her life, and

* Subjoined is one of Louisa’s letters to her father, dated early in the spring of 1808, which is interesting as containing a clear and just view of the state of affairs, and of the tendency of events, as well as on account of the beautiful spirit of Christian resignation which breathes from it, and which caused it to be said that her letters were written “with a pen from the wing of an angel.”

“All is over with us, for the present, if not for ever. For my life I hope nothing more ; I have resigned myself, and in this resignation, in this dispensation of Heaven, I am now tranquil, and enjoy a repose which, if it be not earthly happiness, is something more, even spiritual peace.

“It becomes ever clearer to me that all was ordained to take place as it has done. Divine Providence is unmistakably introducing new combinations of affairs, and a wholly different order of things will arise, for the old one has overlived itself and crumbled together, all dead and decayed. We have fallen asleep on the laurels of Frederic the Great, who, the hero of his century, created a new era. We have not advanced with the time, it has therefore left us behind. We may learn much from the French Emperor, and what he has accomplished will not be lost. It would be blasphemy to say, God be with him, yet evidently he is an instrument in the hand of the Almighty to bury those old institutions in which, indeed, there is no life, but which have become deeply rooted by time.

“Certainly things will become better. For that we have the security of our faith in the Almighty. Yet good can only come into the world through the good. Therefore I do not believe that the Emperor Napoleon is firm and secure upon his now truly glittering throne. Truth and justice alone are calm and secure, and he is only politic, that is prudent ; he directs his course, not by eternal laws, but by circumstances, as they exist at present ; by this means he tarnishes his reign with many acts of injustice. He does not mean honestly by the good cause and by mankind. He in his boundless ambition consults only himself and his personal interest. One must admire, but one cannot love him. He is dazzled by his success, and he thinks nothing is impossible to him ; he is therefore without all moderation ; and he who does not keep within measure loses his balance and falls. I believe firmly on God, and also in the moral government of the world. This I do not perceive in the dominance of violence. On this account I have a hope that a better time will follow the present evil one.

“All the better portion of mankind expect and wish the same, and one must not be led astray by the eulogists of the present and its hero. All that has happened and is still happening, is unmistakably not the ultimate good, as it shall come, and shall remain, but only the paving of the way to a better end. This goal seems still to lie in the remote distance ; we shall not behold its attainment, but shall die upon the road. As God wills—All as He wills it. But I find strength, courage, and cheerfulness in this hope, which lies deep in my soul. Is then all in

the flowers were turning into cypresses.* Yet not wholly so, whilst she could still write, "Amidst my sorrow there are still days with which I am content : it is true that man has no share in my happiness, which is wholly inward : as regards outward things, it is the friendship of the King alone, his confidence and his affectionate behaviour, which make my happiness." But Louisa's health had suffered much from grief and trouble, and she feared the cold, dreary winter in the bleak climate of Memel ; on the 15th Jan., 1808, therefore, the evacuation of the French troops as far as the Weichsel having been at length effected, she, her husband and children, went to Königsberg. The Princesses William and Radizwill, who, as well as her sister the Princess of Solms, had remained with her and cheered her by their society throughout all her distresses, also accompanied her thither. Frederic William, before leaving Memel, sent a letter of thanks to the "brave and good citizens of Memel, for the manifold and hearty proofs of love, faithfulness, and attachment to my person, to my wife, and to my whole family, during my residence amongst them, and as it will never be forgotten that Memel alone, of all the towns of my dominions, has been spared the immediate presence of war, so I shall always thankfully remember that Divine Providence has allowed my family to find shelter there," &c.

An affecting ceremonial took place at the christening of the child to which Louisa gave birth soon after her arrival at Königsberg (1st Feb., 1808). The child was named Louisa by the King's particular desire. "May she prove a Louisa," he had said to his wife, when he expressed the wish. He now

this world but in course of transit? We must pass through, too. Let us take heed only that every day render us more prepared and better. Here, dear father, you have my political confession of faith, so far as I, as a woman, can form and put it together. Although it may have its flaws, I am contented with it ; yet excuse me that I trouble you with it. You see, at least, from it, that you have a daughter who is piously resigned in misfortune, and that the principles of Christian fear of God, for which I have to thank your pious teaching and example, have borne, and will bear, fruit in me, so long as I have breath."

* Jean Paul, "Schmerzlich-tröstende Erinnerungen."

invited representatives from all the Stände (*i. e.* from the nobility, the citizens, and the agriculturists) of old Prussia, in whose chief town she was born, to be sponsors for the child, "and they stood amidst his family, and were his family, and laid their hands upon the child, and prayed for him and his house," says Bardeleben,* ("and with whom should he share his paternal cares, if not with his people?") Then it grew still in the royal chambers, and deep emotion united every heart in one great common love and one great common sorrow. Louisa Wilhelmina, the consecrated of the people, thou art the mediator between the King and us, the pledge of mutual truth; out of thine innocent eyes speak the people to the King, 'We are thine, master. Be strong, and remain true to thyself!'" As the spring advanced, the King hired a small country house in the village of Haben, near Königsberg, where the author Hippel had formerly resided, in order that the Queen and the children might benefit by the country air; here, although their establishment was only that of private persons of the most moderate means, much simple pleasure was enjoyed by the King and Queen, even in the midst of their misfortunes. "One does not require much to be contented," said she; "healthy air, tranquil scenery, a few shady trees, a few flower-beds, and an arbour, are enough; my husband and I are, with our children, sufficient for ourselves: besides, I have good books, a good piano, and a good conscience; and thus one can live more quietly amidst the storms of life than those by whom the storms are excited." Had Louisa been able to forget her country's troubles, she might here have almost imagined herself back at Paretz, says Eylert, so great was the love which the simple country people lavished on her and her family here—standing at the doors to bless them as they passed, and watching for occasions of affording them some little proof of their attachment. The flowers with which they garlanded the gates of the King's house upon his birthday were as precious to Louisa as

* See Förster, "Sechs Jahre."

the gift of Oranienburg had been when she was a bride. Nor were these acts of kindness unreciprocated by the royal family, who, even in their poverty, had something for others still poorer than themselves. The elder of the royal children had been accommodated by a neighbour, there being no room for them in their father's house. Eylert relates that on the name-day of their hostess she had gone to a friend's house to celebrate the occasion, in order not to inconvenience her guests; the Queen, hearing of it, immediately prepared a little entertainment in the good woman's own house, and sent a carriage for her and her friends, that she might as usual celebrate the day at home. And by a thousand such little instances as these did Louisa prove that, unselfish and kind-hearted as ever, she was still practising the golden rule, "Do unto others as thou wouldst that they should do unto thee." The following letter to her father, written about this time, shows that the effect of the comparative calm of their abode at Haben was producing a salutary effect upon her mind, which was gradually recovering its naturally cheerful tone:—

"May, 1808.—You will gladly hear, dear father, that the misfortune which has struck us has not penetrated to our married and domestic happiness, but has rather confirmed and purified it. The King, the best of men, is more affectionate and kind than ever. I often think I see in him still the lover and the bridegroom. More given as he is to actions than to words, I recognise his consideration and love for me everywhere. Only yesterday he said to me, quietly and simply, with his truthful eyes fixed on me, 'Dear Louisa, thou hast become to me still dearer and more precious in misfortune; now I know from experience what I possess in thee. Let the storm beat without, so that it be and remain only fair weather in our union. It is because I love thee so that I have named our youngest daughter Louisa; may she prove a Louisa.' This goodness moved me to tears. It is my pride, my joy, and my happiness, to possess the love and approbation of such a man, and because I reciprocate

his love from my heart, and because we are so much at one together, that the will of the one is the will of the other, it is easy to me to maintain this happy, mutual understanding, which has become stronger with years. In one word, he suits me in every respect, and I suit him, and we are happiest when we are together. Forgive me, dear father, if I say this with a certain boastfulness; it is but the simple expression of my happiness, which no one in the world has more warmly at heart than you, dearest and tenderest of fathers. To other people—that also I have learnt from the King—I do not wish to speak of it; it is enough that we know it. Our children are our treasures, and upon them our eyes dwell with satisfaction and hope. The crown Prince is full of life and spirit; he has considerable abilities, which are being happily cultivated and developed; he is true in all his sentiments and words, his vivacity makes dissimulation impossible; he has a particular delight in the study of history, in which that which is great and good has an especial attraction for his imagination; he has great appreciation of wit, and his droll and unexpected remarks often amuse us. He attaches himself especially to his mother; he cannot be purer hearted than he is; I love him very dearly, and often talk with him of the manner in which he must act when he shall be king.

“ Our son William* (let me introduce all your grandchildren to you in succession) will be, if I am not deceived, like his father, simple, honest and prudent. In his exterior also he resembles him the most, but he will not, I think, be so handsome. You see, dear father, I am still in love with my husband.

“ Our daughter Charlotte† causes me ever-increasing pleasure. She is indeed silent and reserved, but, like her father, under a seemingly cold exterior she conceals a warm and feeling heart; apparently indifferent, yet she is very loving and sympathizing. Hence there is something distinguished about her; if God should preserve her life, I foresee for her a brilliant future.

* Born 1797; now Prince of Prussia.

† Born 1798; afterwards Empress of Russia.

“Karl is good-natured, merry, honest, and clever, and as well formed in body as in mind; he often has naïve ideas which make us laugh; he is cheerful and witty, his incessant questions sometimes perplex me, because I either cannot or do not like to answer them, yet it shows a wish for knowledge, and sometimes when he laughs slily, a little mischief also; he, without want of feeling for the weal and woe of others, will pass easily through life.

“Our daughter Alexandrina* is, like most little girls of her age and disposition, insinuating and childlike, she shows tokens of a just understanding and a lively imagination, and often laughs heartily; she has much perception of the comic, and a disposition for satire, she looks very serious withal; yet this does not injure her disposition.

“Of little Louisa† I can say nothing as yet. She has the profile of her honest father, and also the King’s eyes, only somewhat lighter. She is named Louisa Mary; may she indeed resemble her ancestress, the amiable and pious Louisa of Orange, the wife of the great Elector.

“Here, my dear father, I have placed before you my whole portrait-gallery. You will say she is a partial mother, who sees only everything that is good in her children, and has no eyes for their faults and failings; and in truth I do not find in any of them such bad dispositions as make me anxious for the future. They have, like other human children, their little faults, but these will disappear with time as they grow wiser. Circumstances and connections educate the man, and it may be good for our children that they should see the serious part of life whilst still in their youth; if they were to grow up in the lap of superfluity and convenience they would think that things would always be so, but that it can be otherwise they see in the countenance of their father, and in the sadness and frequent tears of their mother. It is especially beneficial for the crown Prince that he should have learned to know misfortune whilst still crown

* Archduchess of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

† Louisa married Prince Frederick of the Netherlands.

Prince; he will, should a better time arise for him, as I hope it may, prize prosperity more highly, and guard it more carefully."

Thus amidst the caresses of her happy young family did Louisa strive to bury the consciousness of misfortune: books, also, were an unfailing solace. "I read history industriously, and live in the past because the future is no longer for me. I am reading Süvern's Lectures. I am now at Charlemagne, who was the especial founder of the German era. He stands life-like before me, in all his greatness, splendour and valour, but he attracts me less than Theodoric, who was a true German, his love of justice, the uprightness of his character, the depth of his feeling, and the magnanimity of his heart, prove it; whilst there is already a tincture of the Frenchman about Charlemagne which rather startles me." She became acquainted with the author of these Lectures in the spring of the year. She wrote to her sister, "I have made acquaintance with Professor Süvern, which has put me somewhat in perplexity, for he paid me a compliment which I feel is but little deserved; he said that my opinion of his history was as striking as it was flattering. Yet, uninformed as I am, it must have been the 'majesty' which dazzled his judgment; deeply impressed by this conviction, I appealed from his intellect to his feeling—for he has feeling—and answered that my approbation could have no possible value for him; but I hoped the thought, that in this time of tears and misfortune he had proffered refreshment to my weary spirit, might prove a slight recompense to him. I hope he understood what I meant; but if not, he will hear from Scheffner that the truth, to me, surpasses everything else, and that I look upon it as the soul of history." Queen Louisa's diffidence as to the value of her opinion on matters of literature and talent, seems to have been as great and as ill-founded as her husband's distrust of his own judgment in matters of action. Stein, who had said of the King, "he has most profound views and a very clear judgment, without being aware of it, just as a good man does not know that he is good," said also to the

Queen (whom he admired as an *ächt deutsch* Princess), "Oh ! gracious Queen, how unjust is your mistrust of your own judgment !" whilst Scheffner told her "not to hide her light so often under a bushel" in these matters.

The care and thought which Louisa bestowed upon the education of her own children, and the powerful effects which she observed to be produced by a consistent course of training, had led her to reflect much on the subject of education in its wider application, and the conviction had gradually impressed itself upon her mind, that the best and surest method of regenerating Prussia, would be, since the upper classes had become so corrupt, to extend this benefit to the lower orders. This growing impression caused her to read with avidity every book which she could obtain upon the subject. The writings of Pestalozzi, who was then carrying out his theory of education in Switzerland, of course, therefore, met with her most serious attention. "I am now," writes she, "reading '*Lienhard and Gertrude, a book for the people,*' by Pestalozzi. I like this Swiss village so well, that were I my own mistress I would get into my carriage and roll away to Pestalozzi in Switzerland, to thank the noble man with tears in my eyes ; he does his best for mankind—in the name of mankind I thank him for it." There was one passage in this work which particularly pleased her ; it was this—"Sorrow and suffering are God's blessings." "Yes, and even in my sorrow I can say it is God's blessing," said she. "How much nearer am I to God by reason of it !"

The unhappy destiny of Spain, where the expulsion of another royal family showed the presence of Napoleon's hand, had, as may be supposed, awakened the Queen's commiseration. She writes, "It is a new finger-trace of the iron hand which is passing over the face of Europe ; a warning one for us. To dethrone his first ally in a moment of peace—to sow division between father and son, and drive the Infant from his father's heart and house, and even from the country—what may *we*, in our position, expect ?" Now, the brave struggles of the

Spanish people, and the spirited contest for freedom in the Tyrol, aroused her lively sympathy, and she expressed it in glowing terms. "The flame of Freedom is kindled in Spain as in the Tyrol. 'Auf den Bergen wohnt die Freiheit!' does not this passage ring like a prophecy, when one looks on the mountain bands that have risen at the call of their Hofer? What a man is this Andreas Hofer! a peasant is become a general, and what a general—his arms are prayer, his ally God: he fights on bended knee with folded hands, and conquers as with the flaming sword of the cherubim. And this faithful Alpine people, child-like in their simplicity, they yet fight, like Titans, with the rocks they roll down from their mountains; and in Spain also.—Heavens! if the time of the Maiden should come again, and if the enemy, the evil adversary, should at last be overcome, conquered by the same means as those by which, once, the French, with the Maid of Orleans at their head, drove their hereditary enemy out of their land. Ah! how often have I read the thrilling tale in my Schiller. Why would he (Schiller) not be induced to come to Berlin? Why did he die? Whom God loves here He takes unto Himself."

The political occurrences of the years 1808-9 brought a full portion of suffering to the Queen; the tone of her letters and diary shows that the iron had entered deep into her soul. On July the 9th, 1808, she writes,—"I suffer unspeakably. Reproaches fall upon me only too often; upon me, who like Atlas, bear so huge a burden of sorrow. What can I answer? I sigh, and swallow my tears. It was a year the day before yesterday since I had my first interview with Napoleon; a year yesterday since my last. Ah! what a remembrance. How I suffered then—suffered more for the sake of others than myself. I wept, I entreated in the name of pity, of humanity, in the name of our misfortunes, of the laws which govern the world; and I was only a woman—and yet how high exalted above this adversary—so poor, so faint of heart!" Again, on the 12th of March, 1809, two days after the fête given in

honour of her birthday by the inhabitants of Königsberg, she writes to her confidential friend, Frau Von Berg:—"This is a day in which all the world lays its sins upon me. I am ill, and I do not think I shall recover so long as things go thus. The war with Austria is about to break out, that all the world knows; but what you do not know, and what worries me to death is, that Russia, in consequence of her new alliance with the French, will be obliged to join in it. Consider the results this must have for us, that, if it really goes so far, we too must join this party. Prussia against Austria, what would become of Germany? I cannot express what I feel, it would rend my heart; and here in this banishment, this climate where all storms rage. Oh, God! is this trial not enough? My birthday was a fearful day for me; in the evening there was a magnificent fête given by the inhabitants of the town in my honour, preceded by a banquet at the castle. Oh! how sad it made me; my heart seemed breaking. I danced, I smiled, I said pleasant things to the fête-givers, I was friendly to every one, whilst all the time I knew not which way to turn for misery. To whom will Prussia belong next year? Whither shall we all be dispersed? God—Almighty Father! have pity!" Austria's defeat at Wagram quenched, for the time being, even the faint sparks of hope that lingered in Louisa's heart. She writes, "Alas! oh, God! how much trouble is gone over me! Thou alone helpest. I no longer believe in an earthly future. God knows where I shall be buried—scarcely on German ground. Austria sings her swan-song, and then, *Ade Germania!*" A fresh misfortune was the resignation of Stein, towards the latter part of 1808, when, having incurred the displeasure of Napoleon by certain attempts to restore a spirit of independence amongst German Princes, his surrender was demanded, and it was necessary for him to leave the Prussian dominions.* Under these depressing circumstances, Louisa's

* There appears also to have been some tendency to intrigue in the Court at this time, to displace Stein. He warned the King before he left, of the indis-

only refuge was her unshaken trust in God. Her piety, always sincere and earnest, had now become the one principle of her life and actions, yet there was no ostentatious display of it; on the contrary, she approached religious subjects, and expressed her opinions upon them, with diffidence. Yet there was an expression of "longing and thirsting"* for holiness in her manner, when she did touch upon religion, that was unmistakable in its sincerity. Borrowsky draws a portrait of her at this time of trial, the tender melancholy and softness of whose outline and colouring is exceedingly touching. "Gay, our dear Queen certainly is not in this *Passions-Zeit*, but her seriousness has a quiet cheerfulness about it, and the faith and courage which God gives her, spread over her whole being a sweetness which may be called dignified. Her eyes indeed have lost their early liveliness, and one sees in them that she has wept, and still weeps much, but they have acquired a mild expression of soft melancholy, and silent longing, which is better than mere joyousness. The bloom has vanished from her cheeks, and is replaced by a soft palor; yet her face is still fair, and the white roses there please me almost better than the earlier red ones. Round her mouth, where a sweet happy smile used to play, one now, from time to time, remarks a trembling of the lip, which speaks of pain, but not of bitter pain."

Prince William, who had long been at Paris endeavouring to obtain a more satisfactory settlement with France, had at length succeeded in obtaining the actual evacuation of the country by the French troops (with the exception of the garrisons of the fortresses on the Oder). The execution of this engagement, therefore, began to afford the Royal family a prospect of returning to Berlin at no very distant period. In the meantime the Emperor Alexander, having, in passing Königsberg on his road to and from the conference with Napoleon at Erfurt, made a

secret conversations carried on in Frau von Voss's room, by means of which many important state secrets had got abroad.

* Borrowsky.

short visit to the King and Queen of Prussia, he pressed them to return it at St. Petersburg. The rigour of the season and the expense of the journey both offered serious objections to the plan. The invitation was, however, ultimately accepted, and on the 27th December, 1808, Frederic William and Louisa set off for Russia. They were met by Alexander, who had provided every accommodation for them on their passage through his dominions, at a short distance from St. Petersburg. Their stay there was marked by all kinds of hospitable attentions on the part of the Emperor, by whom all kinds of magnificent gifts * were heaped upon the Queen, with greater profusion than delicacy. But Louisa found a sympathizing friend in the Empress Elizabeth, although that Princess, from the delicacy of her health, was obliged to lead a very retired life. The untiring benevolence of the Empress Mother also struck her as being in a high degree worthy of imitation, and she was much interested in the various charitable institutions founded by that lady. But upon the whole, although she had been gratified by the kindness lavished upon her husband and herself, Louisa appears to have been rather glad than otherwise to return to Königsberg, at which place they arrived on the 10th February. "I am come back as I went," said she; "nothing dazzles me now; and once more I repeat, my kingdom is not of this world."

The birth of Prince Frederic Henry, in the autumn of this year, left the Queen's health more delicate than usual; and the longing sensation of home sickness seems more forcibly than ever to have taken possession of her. She speaks of a journey to Pillau, which she was shortly about to make, if her health permitted it, and says, "If it were only to Berlin, *Dahin, Dahin, möchte ich gleich ziehn!*"

This longing desire of their Queen to return amongst them, was enthusiastically responded to by the inhabitants of Berlin,

* Amongst these presents, were a set of magnificent pearl and brilliant ornaments, magnificent specimens of Brussels' lace, a toilet service in gold, &c.

now that the restraint of the presence of the French troops was withdrawn ; although it must be allowed, that, with but few exceptions, the worthy citizens had hitherto shown the most politic disinclination to run any risk, by the display of a too fervent loyalty. But the people of Berlin never were celebrated for their chivalrous inclination to sacrifice ease, comfort and *self*, more especially at that time, when the effects of long peace and luxurious habits, had left them even unusually disinclined to personal inconvenience, particularly when it included personal risk. There were not wanting, it is true, a few honourable examples of self-devotion in the cause of loyalty ; yet, in no slight degree illustrative of the character of the citizens at that time, is the fact, that Berlin left the assertion of its chivalry and loyalty—to a priest and an actor !* All the usual public rejoicings had been forbidden, by order of the French Commandant, on the Queen's birthday, 10th March, 1807 ; nevertheless, Iffland, one of the best actors of the day, stepped forth that night upon the stage, holding a bouquet of flowers, which, first glancing significantly round upon the audience, he pressed to his breast, in tacit homage to her, whose cherished image was that day especially present to all hearts. The gesture was immediately understood, and thunders of applause shook the house. Of course, this attempt to excite the public feeling, could not fail to be displeasing to the French authorities, and Iffland was imprisoned for his devotion to his Queen. During Napoleon's own sojourn at Berlin, also, he permitted himself, upon a public occasion, to make some injurious assertion with regard to the Queen. Erman,† the French clergyman, then an old man, bluntly exclaimed, "That is false, Sire !" It is said, that the Emperor was so astonished at the boldness of this speech, that he allowed it to pass without notice. If there had been any magnanimous feeling in his mind, we might have supposed that Napoleon was actuated by admiration of the old man's heroic defence of his absent sovereign, that he did not

* Förster.

† Author of "Mém. pour servir à la Vie de Soph. Charlotte."

cause him to feel the effects of his anger at having the lie given him in so public a manner. At all events, Erman escaped unpunished. But there was now no reason to prevent all the hitherto (from whatever motives of self-preservation and policy) pent-up loyalty of the citizens, from finding unrestrained expression; consequently, the intelligence that the royal family was about to return to its ancestral home, was hailed with fervent demonstrations of delight by all.

The King and Queen returned to their capital on the 23rd December, 1809, the anniversary of the day, on which, sixteen years before, Louisa had entered Berlin as a bride, and been greeted, as upon this day, by the acclamations of the assembled citizens. But, alas! with what saddened feeling did she contrast the two occasions, so similar, yet so unlike. Then, youthful and untried, she had looked forward with buoyant hope upon the bright future which lay before her, glowing with the rosy hues of love and happiness. Now, she gazed back upon the experience of years, which had seemed fraught with the concentrated suffering of centuries; and if she turned her eyes forward, they were only met by the gloomy mist of uncertainty which still shrouded the destinies of her country and her house. A short time before her return, she wrote, "So, I shall soon be back in Berlin, and restored to so many hearts that love me. I feel overpowered with joy; yet I shed many tears, when I think, that though I shall find all in the same place, all is so wholly changed, that I cannot comprehend how things will be there; black forebodings trouble me."

It was a bright winter's morning that 23rd of December. An elegant new carriage, lined with lilac, the Queen's favourite colour, had been sent as a present by the citizens to meet her at Weissensee.* Between ten and eleven o'clock, the thunder of the saluting cannon and the peal of the joy bells gave notice to the expectant crowds at the gates of Berlin, that the King and Queen were at hand. At last appeared the white banners

* An English mile from Berlin.

of the royal *cortège*, and then came the King on horseback, in his uniform, simple and dignified as ever ; and the Queen in the new carriage, her people's gift, her beautiful face varied by the play of contending feelings, as she bent forward eagerly to catch the earliest sight of each well-known spot, and returned with mingled smiles and tears the affectionate greetings that met her on every side. Her father, the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, was waiting to receive her, and give her and her children his blessing on their return, by this means affording her an additional source of happiness. Thus, surrounded by all that was dearest to her, Louisa re-entered the *home* for which she had been sighing so long. That night at the theatre all the audience joined in the air of "God bless the King." Fouqué says of this occasion, "At length we beheld the royal family amongst us once more ; it fell to my lot to be honoured with a sight of our angel-fair Queen. She appeared at the theatre, at the side of her royal husband, upon whom she several times turned her truly *heaven-blue* eyes with an unspeakably touching expression. Did the foreboding even then exist in her gentle soul, that she should not long be the comforting guide of the sorely-tried hero ? When, according to the custom of that time, she bowed graciously to the departing assembly, I for one deeply felt, that though I had sometimes thought we Prussians might bear our misfortunes more tranquilly, and turn our attention once more to manufacture and science, as the great Frederic had proposed to do, had he been defeated at Mollwitz—but no, those clear, angelic eyes had been made too heavy with tears by means of Napoleon—they have wept for our sake ; we must fight, and see them light up with joy over our victory—and this is the expression of the common feeling." *

On this first appearance at the theatre the Queen sent for Iffland the actor, who had ventured to declare for her cause amidst the general pusillanimity, when the French were in possession of Berlin, to her box, and publicly thanked him for his

* See Förster.

loyalty, expressing at the same time her sorrow for the imprisonment to which he had been subjected on her account. The venerable Erman received a like graceful expression of her thanks for his devotion to her, on another public occasion: when, going towards him with a filled glass, she begged him to pledge her, saying, "I cannot deny myself the pleasure of drinking to the health of the knight who, when all else were silent, had the courage to break a last lance for the honour of his Queen."

The King was more than ordinarily cheerful after his return to his capital; but it was not so with Louisa. There was now an air of sadness about her which had not been perceptible even in the time of her heaviest afflictions. The tension of the overstrained mental powers was relaxed, now that the need for present exertion was over, and a subdued melancholy took the place of her usual cheerfulness. She was indisposed also, with cough and slight attacks of spasms in the chest; but this passed off as the spring advanced, and she gradually became more like herself in manner and appearance. This improvement was a source of great satisfaction to the King; for the unwonted depression of her spirits had made him anxious and uneasy. The weather was unusually beautiful that spring, and once more at their favourite residence at Potsdam, Frederic William and Louisa could almost at times have imagined that they had never left it, and that the intervening period of sorrow had been only a frightful dream. He was in good spirits, even sportively gay at times, and she cheerful, yielding, and affectionate as ever. He said to Eylert one day, in a tone of deep thankfulness, "The Queen has been again as cheerful as she used to be to-day; I shall be very thankful if her tendency to sadness gives way. It cannot be otherwise now; we shall have better days soon." Louisa received the Sacrament on Easter Sunday, from the hands of Dr. Ribbeck. "No one who saw her at that moment," says he, "will ever forget her. The light of sanctification seemed to flow around her; her noble features assumed

a heavenly expression ; she bore the pledge of eternal happiness within her heart."

It had been a birthday promise from her husband that as soon as he could spare the time, they would together pay a visit to her father. She had wished much to go in 1806 to see her grandmother, the kind guardian of her early years, who was now too old to undertake the fatigue of a journey to Berlin ; but she had been prevented from putting her wish into execution. The visit was now fixed to take place in June. On the 24th of that month Louisa, accordingly, set off for Mecklenburg, whither her husband was to follow her shortly. Notwithstanding the pleasurable excitement caused by the prospect of seeing her friends and the home of her youth, and of renewing all her early associations, an unaccountable depression weighed upon Louisa's mind as they approached the borders of Mecklenburg ; but this was dissipated by the unexpected pleasure provided for her at Fürstenburg, whither her father, her sister of Solms, and her two brothers had come to meet her. On seeing a party awaiting her arrival, she did not at first sight guess who they were ; but recognising her father, as he approached the carriage, she exclaimed, " Ah, my father ! " and flung her arms round his neck. At New Strelitz her aged grandmother was waiting on the steps of the palace to receive her. There was an assembly in her honour the day after her arrival. She missed one of her early friends from the circle, and finding, on inquiry, that she was unable, from ill health, to be present at so ceremonious a reception, she sent for her to come privately the next day. One of the ladies present remarked on the beauty of a set of pearl ornaments worn by the Queen. " Yes," said she, " I am fond of these ornaments ; I kept them back when I had to part with all my other jewels. Pearls suit me, they are emblematic of tears, and I have shed so many." The King arrived on the 28th, and now the measure of her happiness was indeed full. Having a slight cold, she had been left in the house with her brother, Prince George, whilst the rest

of the party went to look at some alterations that had been made in the chapel. She said to her brother, "Dear George, now I am quite happy," and then seating herself at her father's *escritoire*, she wrote—

"My dear Father,

"I am very happy to-day as your daughter, and as the wife of the best of husbands.

"LOUISE."

"Neu-Strelitz, 28 June, 1810."

These were the last words she ever wrote. On the 29th, the party went to the old ducal castle of Hohenzieritz; and here Louisa's indisposition became more serious. She was seized with an attack of spasms and difficulty of breathing; on Sunday, July 1st, she was bled, the next day she was better, but weak and ill; still she had never thought of deferring her departure with the King on that day, until Hieronymi, her father's medical attendant, who had been called in, said that he thought it would be desirable. She was very unwilling to let her husband go without her, but seeing that he was already very anxious on her account, she submitted patiently, and he left her the next day, promising to return as soon as possible. She seemed much better afterwards, though she was still confined to her bed, and she fainted when she was removed to her father's apartments (which he had given up to her as being more convenient). The King himself fell ill on his return, and was laid up at Charlottenburg; he sent his physician Heim, therefore, to ascertain her state of health. Heim, after seeing her, and holding a consultation with Hieronymi, considered all serious cause of alarm at an end, and returned to acquaint the King with the good news. After this she varied considerably for some days; the King's illness pressed much upon her mind, and she was always longing to go to him. She looked out for his letters eagerly, and kept them under her pillow, taking them out to look at now and then, and saying, "How

happy I am to receive such letters.” She was very anxious about her children, and pleased at receiving a birthday letter from one of her little daughters. On the Sunday week following, she was very much better, and felt joyfully certain of a speedy recovery; but the next day, at eight o’clock in the morning, whilst hearing the papers read (which as containing news of Louis Buonaparte’s abdication, were then particularly interesting), she was seized with another violent fit of the spasms and difficulty of breathing, during which she could only gasp at intervals, “Air! air!” The attack lasted till one o’clock, and during the whole time she was in great danger. The violence of the spasms then abated, but left her dreadfully exhausted. She said, “I thought my end was near.” The King was sent for, but being prevented by indispensable business from setting off immediately, he again sent Heim, who arrived on Tuesday. All this time, says Eylert, Louisa lay looking like an angel, now and then repeating to herself parts of hymns she had learnt in her childhood; thankful for everything, anxious that her attendants should leave her to go to bed themselves; her greatest fear seemed to be lest this watching and anxiety should prove injurious to her father and grandmother. On Wednesday, at midnight, another attack of spasms seized her, and again that faint cry for “Air! air!” rent the hearts of her anxious friends. Her father, who had gone to lie down at her repeated entreaty, was called at three o’clock. “Lord, thy ways are not as our ways,” said the old man, solemnly. When the attack wore off, her sister asked her if she were in much pain. “No,” replied she, “but I am very faint; and when the bad spasms come on, I feel as if I *must* die.” She said to Heim, “It would be hard if I should die; think of the King and the children.” She heard with delight that the King would arrive in the morning, as she had not expected him till Friday, and it had seemed so long to wait. Towards dawn she asked, “Is it nearly morning?” and, again, “How late is it? Will it be hot?” They told her it was cloudy. “I am glad,”

said she; "I am always so hot." She was now so excessively feeble that she was unable to move in the least. She smiled, and said to an attendant, "Though I am Queen, I cannot raise my own arm." At 4 o'clock that morning (the 19th), the King arrived; he asked eagerly if she was better, but the countenances that met his eye were answer enough. Heim reluctantly informed him that there was confirmed disease of the heart, and that, humanly speaking, there was no hope. Those who saw him after that announcement said that the expression of intense pain stamped upon his face was perfectly fearful, he was scarcely recognisable. He then went to the Queen, who was asking for him eagerly. He embraced her, but could not speak, and she, accustomed only to his usual calmness, was startled at his agitation as he stood trembling with suppressed agony beside her. "Dear friend," said she, "why are you so sad? am I in such great danger?" he replied, evasively, that it distressed him to see her suffer. "Thank God that I am here!" added he. The tears gushed from her eyes at this, but, recovering herself, she asked, "How did you come?" "In the yellow chaise." "In the open carriage, with your fever?" "Yes, in the open one." "Who came with you?" "Fritz and Wilhelm." "Oh, what delight!" Frederic William could bear this no longer; he left her under the pretext of fetching her sons. When he had left the room she said, "It has shaken me to see him, his embrace was so passionate, as if he was bidding me farewell—as if I *must* die!" The crown Prince and Prince William now came to her; she repeated several times, "My Fritz! my Wilhelm!" and looked at them long and wistfully. They were not allowed to remain long, and her husband having again subdued his emotion, came to resume his place beside her; he put one arm round her, and held her hand; the spasms became more and more violent. "Lord Jesus, make it short!" said she; she gave a soft, low sigh, leaned her head back gently—and so departed.*

* She died on the 19th July, 1810, at Hohenzieritz. Jean Paul says, "She

For a season all were still; it seemed as if her spirit might still be hovering near. At length Frederic William rose up, kissed and closed the sweet eyes, and stood gazing silent and tearless at the heavenly repose of the beautiful, motionless face; then, a stricken man, he left her side. He sought his two sons, and led them to take their last look at their mother's face. Whilst they knelt and sobbed beside her, he walked to and fro, with an expression of stony despair upon his countenance. He seemed to have grown years older in those few hours of suffering. No tears came to his relief: the source of them was frozen. He had said in his bitter agony when he left her, lest she should witness his despair, "If she had not been *mine* she would not have died." Now he shut up his grief deep in his own breast, and became more silent and reserved than ever. Eylert thought for a time that he was becoming misanthropic; but as time, at length, softened the bitterness of his grief, a spirit, more akin to that which had animated her gentle heart, and bade her love her kind so tenderly, again resumed its sway. He carefully collected and preserved every relic of her that he could find. He used to stand in turn before all the portraits which had been taken of her; but so much had depended upon the changeful expression of her countenance, that no really good likeness had been obtained: he was not satisfied with any of them. He then employed Ternite, who had taken a cast of her face in death, to paint a portrait of her. He had a studio prepared in the palace, and used to go there every day to watch the progress of the picture under the artist's hand; he would sometimes return at night to look at it again, when he used to write his remarks, or wishes for alteration, on a slip of paper, and attach it to the canvas, as a guide for Ternite in the morning. One day he brought all the pictures of her that he could find in the palace, to afford suggestions; still he was not satisfied; at length he asked to see the mask.

died in the *Lustschloss*, where she was born. If it must lose its happy name, call it a temple. She died in it, so holy and so fair."

Ternite had been told by the Princess Radizwill on no account to let him see it. Noticing the artist's hesitation, therefore, he said, "I can bear to see it." It was brought. The King cast but one glance at it, and then burst into a fit of violent weeping. They were the first tears he had shed.* "Fearfully like," said he; "take it away; do not let me see it again."† He then employed Rauch to make a design for a monument for her. He did not wish it to represent precisely either the stiffness of death or the carelessness of natural sleep. At length the design satisfied him, and Rauch went to Carrara to work it out.‡ This monument was placed in the Mausoleum at Charlottenburg. Rauch had wrought another sculpture, representing Louisa reclining in a peaceful, natural slumber, intending to keep it himself; but this was so exquisite that when the King saw it, his wish to possess it was so great that Rauch could not refuse to let him have it. This was placed in the Antique Temple at Sans-Souci.§

The "Seherin of Prevorst" had then been recently published, and had caused considerable excitement upon the subject of the possibility of communion between the living and the spirits of the departed. Eylert had preached upon the inutility of such enquiries. The King took him into the garden at Charlottenburg shortly afterwards. He stopped before the bust of the great Elector, and said, "He, too, had a Louisa." Then drawing Eylert on towards the Mausoleum, he said, "In the first days of my loss, when her image was still fresh and vivid in my mind, I used foolishly to wish that she could appear and speak to me. Often at night, when I could not sleep, I have

* "When thou didst soar on high, then wept all who had heard of thee, all who had seen thee; but those whom thou hadst pressed upon thy heart, they could not shed a tear."—"Schmerzlich-tröstende Erinnerungen."

† Eylert.

‡ The vessel containing the finished work, was captured by an American ship. It was, however, recaptured by an English privateer, whose captain forwarded the sculpture to Berlin, just as Rauch was about to return to Italy for the purpose of recommencing his work.—*Eylert*.

§ These beautiful sculptures may be seen by visitors on certain days.

risen from my bed and wandered round here. The imagination is strangely vivid when one is sad, especially in dark, sleepless hours." After the first victory in which the arms of Prussia had a share, Frederic William reverently laid a laurel branch upon the coffin of her whose gentle heart had broken at witnessing the sufferings of her country.

All his efforts to benefit the country which she had loved so much were connected with her memory, and generally named with her name. Thus, there was the "Luisen-denkmal," which provided a little dowry for a few poor, but deserving couple who should be betrothed on the anniversary of her death. There was the "Luisen-stiftung," or schools for the training of future governesses, and for the general improvement of the female sex. There was the Order of the Iron Cross, that much-coveted distinction of manly valour, founded on her birthday at the beginning of Prussia's fresh struggles for freedom. And there was, especially, the "Luisens-orden," for those women who, stimulated by the example of the wife of the merchant Welper, the widow of Eden the sculptor, and other ladies whose names are blessed in Prussia's story, so generously devoted themselves to the tendance of the sick and wounded who were brought in from the camp or the field of battle.

Thus was the memory of the sainted dead linked with the ministration of kindness and improvement to the living: and thus, as the symbol of all that is pure, noble, and beneficent, does the Prussian still revere the name of Louisa.

THE END.







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